

# **Problem of the Other in Jean Paul Sartre's Existential Phenomenology**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

*Submitted By*

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*Dedicated to*

*My Father*

**Atul Chandra Sharma**



## Declaration

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Problem of the Other in Jean Paul Sartre’s Existential Phenomenology**” is a research work carried out by me in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, under the supervision of Prof. Archana Barua, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. No part of this thesis has been submitted to any University or Research Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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### Certificate

This is to certify that Pallavi Sharma has prepared the thesis entitled “**Problem of the Other in Jean Paul Sartre’s Existential Phenomenology**”, under my supervision for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The thesis is the result of her own investigations during the period she worked here as a research scholar in strict conformity with the rules laid down for the purpose.

The present thesis or any part thereof has not been submitted to any other University or Research Institute for award of any degree or diploma.

All assistance received by the researcher has been duly acknowledged.

Prof. Archana Barua  
Supervisor

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## Abstract

The thesis makes an attempt to analyse the problem of the Other as treated in the existential phenomenology of Jean Paul Sartre in its different shades. Western philosophy, since the Greek period, mainly focusses on the issues related to the self. This gets more intensified after Descartes' insistence on the certainty of the *Cogito*. Challenging the Cartesian *Cogito* centered views, phenomenology appears as a trend giving significance to the Other introducing the concept of intersubjectivity as a primary structure of the self. However, considering the Other in a structural unity with the self, the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger fails to accommodate the issues like conflict, alienation and oppression, which disturbs our life in the present situation at every moment. The problem remains as how to present such shade of intersubjectivity in the philosophical debate? The thesis finds the significance of Jean Paul Sartre's account of the Other presented through his existential-phenomenological analysis. Sartre's analysis opens a paradigm to find a philosophical account to the issues of alienation and conflict. Criticising his predecessors, Sartre presents the Other as a negative force which can transform the original structure of the self. Freedom, being the basic structure of the "for-itself" or human reality, remains here the intervening theme between the self and the Other. Under the pressure of preserving one's individual freedom, the self and the Other always confront in an exchange game of domination where one tries to objectify the Other in order to preserve one's subjectivity. This being the basic attitude, in Sartre's interpretation, concrete intersubjective relation always remains conflicting.

Carrying on this self vs. other picture, Sartre, in his matured writings, takes a political stand raising voice for the oppressed people against the oppressors. This phase gives a kind of Marxist identity to Sartre and his existential-phenomenology is claimed to have merged to the Marxist ideals. The thesis defends Sartre's position in this phase and incorporates the dialogue between Sartre's existential phenomenology and Marxism. As a final turn of this interaction the thesis finally incorporates the ethical notes put forward by Sartre as a guiding principle to the Leftists keeping in view humanity as a whole. His ethical arguments are discussed with a comparative analysis with that of Emmanuel Levinas.

## CHAPTER-I INTRODUCTION

“I cannot discover my truth whatsoever about myself except through the mediation of another. The Other is essential to my existence, as well as to the knowledge I have of myself. Under these conditions, my intimate discovery of myself is at the same time is revelation of the Other as a freedom that confronts my own and that cannot think or will without doing so for or against me. We are thus immediately thrust into a world that we may call “intersubjectivity”. It is in this world that man decides what he is and what others are” (Sartre, 1947/2007, pp. 41-42).

### **1.1. Background of the Problem**

The basic thrust of the present work is motivated by my constant interest in analysing the deeper sense of otherness. One of the prime issues all over the world in the present social set up is found to be identity assertion and recognition. Almost all countries are experiencing conflict over the identity issue in one or the other form of instability. In ethnic, racial or caste crises a self versus Other picture in the form of ‘Us’ and ‘They’ question has been pinching our social life continuously. In our day to day life also we find ourselves to be nurtured in a tradition that makes us aware of the terms ‘Us’ and ‘They’, ‘friend’ and ‘foe’, belonging and not belonging, “in-groups” and “out-groups” which define us. A prevailing sense of otherness is realised to be a major instigating factor behind all these unrests both in individual and social level. Given that this spark of otherness evokes certain immediate questions:

Who is the Other<sup>1</sup>?

What is the nature of the intersubjective self-other relation?

Whether the Other is reciprocal or conflicting?

Does any urge for freedom signify conflict with the Other?

Can it be understood through the philosophers’ lens?

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<sup>1</sup> Since the Thesis primarily looks into the problem of the Other in Sartre’s phenomenology, the spelling of ‘Other’ is also written according to his use of the term. Sartre uses capital ‘O’ in *Being and Nothingness* to mean any external factor countering the self and the same is found in the *Critique* too.

The present study is motivated by these questions. However, these problems are quite common to be inquired by any discipline of social sciences<sup>2</sup>. But, being a student of philosophy, my understanding is that these issues equally carry a legacy from the studies carried out through the philosophers' lenses as well; and hence, it is attempted here, to focus on these issues from the philosophical point of view. However, in the philosophical tradition, particularly in Western philosophy, since the days of Plato and Aristotle, critical discussions have primarily been done centering round the knowing subject, the self or the ego. Philosophical discussions have remained overloaded with metaphysical questions. Even Modern Western philosophy basically runs with the tendency to develop through the 'I' centric Cartesian sentiment, as Descartes establishes the centrality of 'I' or the ego as a thinking substance through the famous dictum "Cogito ergo sum". Hence, the metaphysical discussions following Descartes, until the period of Kant, remains mostly confined to the self or the first person. That there is something to be studied separately about the Other was yet to be considered seriously. Rather, the Other was taken to be a part and parcel of the 'Same', the Self. Remarkably, this tendency has led to the problem about how to ascertain the multiplicity or plurality of existences? How to account for the intersubjective relations? How to account for the practical issues like conflict alienation or ethical responsibility? Thus, the issue of "the Other" arises as a problem to be dealt with, in the contemporary philosophical discussions.

The problem of the Other is brought into picture through the problem of intersubjectivity which figures as one of the most celebrated problems of continental philosophy, more specifically of phenomenology since 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since 1930 the confined philosophical subject turned to become a more social subject acknowledging the fact that beyond our own existence there exists some other identities as well (Irigaray & Guynn, 1995). The newer interest in the intersubjective approach may be said to be a critical reply to the Cartesian self-confined isolated *Cogito*. Descartes, emphasising the isolation of the self, made the existence of other people philosophically impossible (Moyn, 2005, p. 62). With systematic method of doubt he could stand only on one certain point that was the thinking ego, the 'I'. The Cartesian dictum, "I think

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<sup>2</sup> The problem of otherness is a quite focused issue in different disciplines like Sociology, Political Science, Ethnic studies etc. where the problem is analysed from different angles of history, governance, politics, economics and social division. The present work does not take into account these factors in discussing the issue.

therefore I exist (*cogito ergo sum*)”, establishing the certainty of the knowing ego, remained the guiding principle for philosophical discussions till Kant. This trend, hovering round the ego till Kant, hardly shows concern for any serious discussion on the issues related to the problem of the ‘Other’ in their philosophical analyses. However, the logico-epistemological discussion got a small break with Hegelian consideration of the necessity of opposites. While maintaining a somewhat epistemological trend of discussion, what Hegel initiated, was the issue of recognition as found in the master-slave dichotomy. Pursuing this intersubjective gene from Hegelian philosophy, it is the phenomenological tradition, contrary to the analytic trend of philosophy, that delves into the detail study of the self-other relation as problem of the Other.

Broadly, the problem of the Other takes two different dimensions. While one may be interpreted as epistemological, dealing with our knowledge regarding the existence of other minds, the other dimension is said to be ontological dealing with the issue of intersubjectivity as the fundamental aspect of our relation to the Other (Reynolds, 2010).

The difference between the problem of other minds and the problem of intersubjectivity is so thin that it often gets merged in some discussions. However, it is important to clarify that the analysis of the problem of other minds particularly heads through the questions like- how can we know that a person is in any particular mental state? In other words, is there any rational ground for believing that other human beings also have similar experiences like my own? (Chakravarty, 2000, p. 143). Here, the access to another mind, is always targeted via one’s bodily behaviour. The argument which relies on the inference of someone’s mental state through one’s bodily behaviour is known as the Argument from Analogy. The theme of this analogy is-- I can observe that when my body gets influenced or comes in contact with some external cause then I perform certain action. For example I scream whenever I feel severe pain in any part of my body. I have same observation about other bodies acting in a similar manner when influenced by some cause and therefore, I infer by analogy that behaviours of others are associated with similar experiences as of mine. Thus, argument from analogy tries to interpret the hidden mental state from observable public behaviour on the basis of the consideration that the self and the Other are same (Zahavi, 2005).

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Analogical argument on the problem of other minds, cannot do justice to the self-other relation as it is primarily concerned with the knowledge of the mental state of other people and not with the different modalities of the self-other relation in concrete day today life. Max Scheler criticises the Argument from Analogy for underestimating the difficulties involved in self experience and overestimating the difficulties involved in experience of the Other. Denying the need of any inference to get acquainted with the Other he holds that while facing the Other we do not confront a mere body or a mind but the Other as a unified whole ( as cited in Zahavi 2005). However, though it does not provide a sufficient solution to the problem of other minds, the Argument from analogy, at least, sustains the reason to believe in the existence of the Other and thus stands against the Cartesian isolated 'I'.

But, the specific problem emphasised here is not related to the knowledge of the mental states of some other person existing beyond the self. Here, the focus is basically on a problem regarding the self-other relation or the problem of intersubjectivity i.e. the ontological dimension of the issue which takes into account the fundamental aspects of our relation to the Other. Various criticisms on the insufficiency of the Argument from Analogy in accessing other minds bring to focus one common opinion that other minds are never fully accessible in the same sense in which I can access my own mental states. But, the uncertainty about the specific beliefs or intentions of other persons does not put the very existence of the Other in question. Referring to Merleau Ponty, Zahavi (2005) states, "our relation to others is deeper than any specific uncertainty we might have regarding them" (as cited in Zahavi 2005, 155). This constitutional imperfection, in knowing the Other, recognises the Other as Other with its distinctive nature from the self; and here appears the phenomenologists' account on the issue of intersubjectivity; the self-other discourse.

Intersubjectivity has occupied a significant space as one of the most characteristic terms and problems of the continental philosophy for the last century centering round the discussion of individuality and sociality (Moyn, 2005, p. 7). Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), the Father of the Phenomenological movement, is credited for introducing a serious turn into the discussion of the problem of the Other, through the mode of intersubjectivity (Watson, 1986). According to Husserl, the world is always inter-

monadic, where the Other always exists as the permanent condition, as a meaning giver to every object. For him, the Other is the “veritable guarantee” of the object’s objectivity. As both the psycho-physical self and the Other exist here in this world as phenomena, hence, the Other, according to Husserl, appears necessary to the very constitution of the self. As he holds, “My empirical Ego and the Other’s empirical Ego appear in the world at the same time. The general meaning of the ‘Other’ is necessary to the constitution of each one of the ‘Egos’” (as cited in Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 316).

Again Heidegger, going totally against the Argument from Analogy, claims that the existence of the intersubjective world is primary and no individual exists alone to discover the Other in a later experience. According to him, “I do not exist first in order that subsequently a contingency should make me encounter the Other. I apprehend ‘being-with-others’ as an essential characteristic of my being” (as cited in Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 330). Hence, according to him, the problem of the Other remains no more a problem to carry further.

However, the phenomenologists till Heidegger could hardly do justice to the specific nature of the Other as they somehow or the other kept moving around the knowing subject, addressing the Other as an ‘alter ego’ (Husserl) and ‘anyone in the crowd’ (Heidegger). In Husserlian terms the phenomenological self includes both noesis (intentional acts) and noema (their objects) (Critchley, 2007). Similarly, in Heideggerian term, the *Dasein*, which is “Being-in-the-world”, is also a “being-with-others”. Thus, the self and the Other is treated in a holistic manner without bringing forth any significant characteristics of the Other. The Other is seen as the Other of the ‘Same’, the Other of the subject itself, where the ego overpowers and reduces the distance between the Same and the Other (Irigaray & Guynn, 1995). The recognition of strangeness or separateness of the Other is missing in their discussions.

Till Heidegger, in the trend, the distinctive and unique Other did not get required recognition which could have helped to frame some significant theoretical platform for analysing the shades of the self-other relation. It is Jean Paul Sartre, who advances his form of phenomenological argument, showing the role of the Other in giving a different orientation to the structure of the self affecting it in a direct and immediate

encounter(Sartre J. P., 1943/1992). Though, Emmanuel Levinas also focuses on a similar issue, what is very particular about Sartre, is his treatment of negativity through the concept of the Other. Therefore, Sartre's treatment of the Other is worth discussing here pertaining to its depth in dealing with the negative shades of the Other which no other philosopher from the trend tries to establish.

## **1.2. Issues of the Study Undertaken**

The basic features of Sartre's interpretation of the problem of the Other is the direct concern of the study. In this background, it attempts to understand Sartre's notion of the Other as presented in different phases. Related to this, it also looks into the possible outcome of the self-other confrontations. As suggested by available literature, the self-other relation comes in two distinct shades in Sartre's early and later philosophical developments. While the early philosophy depicts a conflicting picture of human reality, his later philosophy moves towards expressing human bonding in socio-political situations. This development eventually shows Sartre's Marxist influence leading to a sort of fusion between existentialism and Marxism. The study focuses on this fusion. Significantly in all phases of development Sartre tries to give some ethical hint with the hope of a better society. Hence a part of the study concentrates on this ethical implication expressed through the role of the Other.

## **1.3. Review of Literature**

The origin and development of the problem of the Other as a problem of intersubjectivity is discussed in different shades in the available literature. Apart from giving direction for formulating objectives of the work, the consulted literature suggest a critical outlook to Sartre's treatment of the Other which is found necessary for further analysis. A brief review of the consulted literature is classified into four sections and outlined in the following.

- a) Tracking the history of the problem of the Other
- b) On Sartre's interpretation of the problem
- c) Conceptualising the Humanism of the Other
- d) Review of Theses on Related Themes

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### a) Tracking the History of the Problem of the Other

Moyn in his book “*Origins of the Other; Emmanuel Levinas Between Revelation and Ethics (2005)*” traces the development of the problem since Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology of intersubjectivity as a way to overcome the singular individual of Descartes and Kant. Tracing it deeper Watson, in “*Reason and the Face of the Other (1986)*” claims the problem to have originated in the Greek philosophy itself. However, he credits Husserl (1859 –1938), for introducing a serious turn into the discussion of the problem of the Other through the mode of intersubjectivity. The same is authenticated through the reading of Jean Paul Sartre’s masterpiece *Being and Nothingness (1943)* where he refers to Husserl as the person first emphasising on the inter-monadic structure of the world where the Other always exists as the permanent condition, as a meaning giver to every object. However, Sartre finds limitations in Husserl’s interpretation and he claims Husserl of presenting the Other as a mirror image of the self which can be attempted to know through a kind of Analogical Argument. With significant reformulation of Husserl’s theory Heidegger claims the intersubjective world to be primary and holds that there is nothing remarkable of the Other since we exist as co-beings. Sartre (1992) criticises these stands and claims that the strangeness of the Other have not been given specific emphasis in these explanations. Thus the Other is always seen as the other of the ‘Same’, the Other of the subject itself, where the ego overpowers and reduces the distance between the Same and the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992),(Irigaray & Guynn, 1995).

Challenging this ‘Self’ dominated trend, Sartre puts forward his argument claiming some significant characteristics of the Other. A similar emphasis, on the strangeness of the Other, is also claimed by Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995). Still, why Sartre remains significant in this debate, is because particularly his analysis gives hint on possible human behaviours behind the issues of human conflict, violence and war, which get expressed through his explanation of the negative encounter of the Other. Sartre claims the Other to be too complex a problem to be reduced to the problem of a mirror’s image like Husserl does. This is considered to be a significant turning to the discussion of the specific issue (Watson, 1986).

## b) Sartre's Interpretation of the Problem of the Other

Sartre introduces the problem of the Other in the phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness* (1943) exploring all possible negative explanations in the self-other encounter. Commending Sartre's notion of the "immediate apprehension of the other" as a radical step, Mitchell (2001) in his book "*Heidegger's philosophy and Theories of the Self*" explains thoroughly how Sartre uses the phenomena of everyday conscious experience like shame and pride to describe ontological structures of the self-other relation. With critical estimation, Mitchell, interestingly opens up a frame to think on the possible uniqueness of Sartre's treatment of the problem of the Other pertaining to its originality and radical nature.

Analysing the terminological senses of the three modes of *being* presented in *Being and Nothingness* as "being-in-itself", "being-for-itself" and "being-for-others", Cox (2006), in his book "*Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed*" defines "being-for-others" as a further aspect of human subjectivity over "being-in-itself" and "being-for-itself". He clarifies that by identifying the phenomenon of "being-for-others", Sartre does not claim to have solved the problem of the existence of other minds. Rather, he seeks to show that the existence of other minds cannot realistically be doubted while experiencing instances of being proud or ashamed. However, as like Grene (1971-1972), Cox also criticises Sartre's emphasis on necessarily conflicting human relationships to be an unjustifiable generalisation and notes the importance of positive human relationship in different situations. A similar criticism also comes from Chiari (1975). He criticises Sartre's view on negative prospect of social struggle and holds Sartre's monism of matter to be unsuccessful. A reply to these criticisms is attempted in the detail discussion of the study structured in five more chapters.

However, coming out of the abstract analysis of *Being and Nothingness* in the matured writings Sartre brings forward the socially engaged man exercising situational freedom. Here, the self-other relation is presented in the socio-political situations, the probable outcomes of which are considered to be alienation, social conflict and violence. *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), *Materialism and Revolution* (1946), *Between Existentialism and Marxism* (1959) are important literature for the discussion of these shifting ideas of later Sartre. The most significant development in these writings is found

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to be Sartre's inclination towards Marxism. In these writings he agrees with Marx in regard to the general schema of class struggle and holds that our history is determined by the forces of production and the production relation along with their correspondences and their conflict.

However, the compatibility between Marxism and Existentialism is a debated issue, which is incorporated in literature with different interpretations. The compatibility between Marxism and existentialism is sceptically seen by different writers like Novack (1980), Delacmpagne (1999), and Lichtheim (1963) in their writings. Nevertheless, a reply to these observations is found possible through Sartre's *Between Existentialism and Marxism* (1959) and Santoni's book *Sartre on Violence Curiously Ambivalent* (2003). Apart from clarifying Sartre's stand on Marxism, these writing suggest a sort ethical implication in Sartre's post War writings.

### c) Conceptualising the Ethical 'Other'

While referring to Sartrean Ethics it will not be possible for us to overlook T. C. Anderson. Concentrating on Sartrean key themes like freedom, alterity, praxis etc. Anderson, in his book *Sartre's Two Ethics* (1993), effectively brings out the ethical tone hidden in the individualistic philosophy of Sartre. He argues that though Sartre could not fulfil his ethical implications in *Being and Nothingness*, in his later writings, like *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1983) and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) he makes effective attempts to maintain it. In these writings, Sartre is found presenting the Other not as an overpowering subject arresting ones freedom but as a fellow being encouraging and helping to fulfil other's projects and thus being authentic. In order to strengthen his views, Anderson also refers to the *unpublished Rome Lecture* (1964) of Sartre which seems to justify the ground for his position as an Ethicist in the later period.

Levinas, in his book *Humanism of the Other* (2003),introduces the concept of the humanity of each human being as only understood and discovered through understanding the humanity of others first. Challenging the dehumanisation of all the social sciences that seek to explain away the human subjectivity in the name of abstract principles, Levinas rehabilitates humanism through the ethical treatment of the Other.

Adding strength to this, against the dominating and conflicting Other, Moyn (2005), presents the ethical theory of the reciprocal Other led by Levinas appended by a history of the origin of the Other in Levinas' philosophy. The ethical Other of Levinas, according to Moyn, is a secularised theological concept. Here, Moyn shows how the Other assumes an ethical structure in Levinas' interpretation through his intellectual deliberations on morality and politics. Moyn's book helps us in tracing the history of the Other in the phenomenological tradition from a mere mirror image to the reciprocal ethical Other and in framing a ethical theory of the Other in relation to the Sartrean concepts.

Tidd, in her article "*The Self-Other Relation in Beauvoir's Ethics and Autobiography*" (1999), emphasises on the reciprocal self-other relationship as held by Beauvoir in her philosophy maintaining the same tune of Levinas' on ethical alterity. While highlighting the self-other relationship in Beauvoir's philosophy, the article helps us to find the distinctive difference between the treatments of the Other in Sartre's Philosophy vis-à-vis Beauvoir.

While Sartre maintains a pessimistic sense in *Being and Nothingness* declaring conflict as the original meaning of "being-for-others", Tidd shows how Beauvoir presents the self-other relation as necessary and potentially reciprocal. Contrary to Sartre's view that the Other steals the world from me, Beauvoir holds that it only seems in a preliminary and naive stage, later the Other gives the real sense of the world to me.

Going against the reductionist theories concentrating on more atomistic individualism Glynn, in his article, "*The Atomistic Self versus the Holistic Self in Structural Relation to the Other*" (2005), emphasises on the interdependence of the atomistic self (the individual) and the holistic self (the society) in our day to day living. According to him, our intrinsic personal identity and our self consciousness arise from socio-cultural structures in relation to others. The self, therefore, is never different from the Other, rather our capacity for self-reflection and evaluation emerge from our relation to the Other. Referring to the Human Scientists, like Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Levi Strauss, he defines how our own conscious states presuppose the existence of other conscious subjects. He states that from the relational terms like the master and slave, teacher and student etc. we can understand that our social identity is essentially

dependent on others and isolation is a meaningless thought. Further, referring to Foucault, he notes that the others are always part of me. Even my intrinsic personal identity or sense of myself as unique individual is influenced by my relation to others. This interpretation may be helpful in understanding Sartre in a broader comparative frame.

#### e) **Review of Theses on Related Theme**

Rosato, Jennifer E. (2010) in her unpublished Ph.D. dissertation “*Opening Oneself to an Other: Sartre’s and Levinas’ Phenomenological Ethics*”, presents a comparative discussion of the phenomenological ontology of Sartre and Levinas. The author specifically presents a detailed comparative picture of the Other as treated by Levinas and Sartre and finally emphasises on the ethics of humanism of the Other prominent in both the philosophers. While analysing the Other in both early and later Sartre the author effectively shows the transition and the essence of alienation inevitably related with the issue of Otherness. But it does not go for detailed discussion of the concept of alienation in its different stages. Moreover, no reference is made to the Marxist theory for Sartre's comparative discussion which Sartre is often claimed to have converted to. Thus it leaves immense scope for further study on the same issue.

Kadir (1971), in his doctoral dissertation “*Jean Paul Sartre’s Atheistic Existentialism and Its Ethical Implication*” fairly explores the ethical implications of Sartre’s individual oriented Atheistic Existentialism as a denial of trans-individual values. In this discussion he outlines most of the basic concepts of Sartre’s philosophy like freedom, responsibility and the individual’s relations with Others as developed in *Being and Nothingness*. Though he tries to capture most of related issues in brief, it leaves considerable scope for more detailed and comparative discussion to be made within a broader frame of study.

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

It is evident from the extant source of literature that there are various studies done on Sartre's concept of the Other. However, in all these studies Sartre’s treatment of the Other gets expressed through different issues like alienation, conflict, authenticity and

further- through his Marxist and Ethical inclinations too. The existing literature presents no such thorough study which exhibits Sartre in all these layers in one single effort. Hence, the present work is proposed with the objective of studying Sartre's notion of the Other in all these different layers within the phenomenological tradition. Literature shows that Sartre refutes both idealistic and realistic arguments along with the analytic and reductionist views trying to provide the epistemological ground for the proof of the existence of the Other. Whereas, without advancing any additional theory to prove the Other he builds up a huge philosophical argumentation on the self-other relation which is highly original in its presentation and cannot be rejected by any other established theory. What makes Sartre's concept of the Other to remain so strong in spite of its being such an unsolvable problem? The present study attempts to focus on this specific issue as well.

### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

In order to satisfy these queries in a structured way the thesis proceeds through certain objectives on the basis of which all the chapters are designed. The study will proceed keeping in view the following objectives:

1. To show the distinctness of Sartre's analysis of the problem of the Other.
2. To examine how the notion of alienation is related to Sartre's concept of the Other in both his Early and Later philosophy.
3. To critically analyse the Marxian tendency of Sartre's philosophy in dealing with the notion of alienation. Does Sartre convert to Marxism or give a newer existentialist Marxism synthesising both?
4. To discuss whether Sartre remains bound with the motto of the conflicting individualistic Other or it opens up towards a humanised and ethical Other through the matured development of his work. If it happens then does it match with Levinas' Humanism of the Other?

### **1.6. Methodology**

In this present study both primary and secondary sources are consulted for an in depth critical analysis of the Sartrean concept of the Other in its different shades. No data collection or sampling comes within the purview of the study. The primary sources are

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the books and creative writings originally written by Sartre, Marx and Levinas and the secondary sources are research articles and books pertinent to the study area.

## **1.7. Layout of the Chapters**

### **Chapter-I: Introduction:**

The problem of the Other, identified as a different problem from the analytical understanding of the problem of the other mind, bears significance in analysing many issues, social or individual experienced in the lived world. The first chapter introduces the problem as an issue of intersubjectivity taken up seriously in the phenomenological trend for analysing the nature of concrete human relations. Giving a direction to the detail work of the thesis this introductory chapter also includes literature review, issues to be discussed in the thesis with specific objectives and the literature gap as well.

### **Chapter-II: Phenomenological Tradition and the Problem of the Other**

With a brief introduction to Sartre, situating him in the entire phenomenological debate over the issue of intersubjectivity, the first part of the chapter keeps note of the basic themes of Sartre's existential phenomenology. In the second part, introducing intentionality as the fundamental theme of phenomenology, the chapter analyses its different interpretations provided by Heidegger, Levinas and finally by Sartre. Reinterpreting the Husserlian concept of intentionality, Sartre presents consciousness as nothingness and establishes "being-for-itself" or embodied human reality as freedom which is condemned to design its identity or essence through the freely chosen activities. Referring to different characters in Sartre's fictions and plays, the chapter argues that the concept of freedom is the most significant concept in dealing with almost all the shades of human life. The issues of conflict, otherness and ethical responsibility, all are based on the concept of freedom that Sartre presents through the "being-for-itself".

The problem of the Other, the prime concern of this work also emerges from Sartre's emphasis on individual freedom. Criticising his predecessors Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre presents the Other as someone who can disturb and steal the freedom of the self. Thus, providing the background of the phenomenological debate over the issue of

intersubjectivity or the problem of the Other, the chapter critically figures out Jean Paul Sartre's position in this frame.

### **Chapter-III: The position of the Other in Sartre's Phenomenological Ontology**

Concentrating on Sartre's phenomenological ontology of the self and the Other, this chapter analyses the problem of the Other as treated in Sartre's philosophy against the interpretations of his predecessors. Sartre presents the Other as a subject having the capacity of transforming one's world to make him apprehend his existence in a different way. With some negative ornamentations Sartre advances the characteristic of the Other basically as a threat which is experienced in being "looked-at" or in the visibility of the self. Introducing the specific characteristics of the Other in terms of negative interruption, the chapter focuses on the issues of shame, alienation and concrete relations with the Other, that hover around Sartre's peculiar interpretation of visibility against the common interpretation of vision. According to Sartre, "the Other is not only the one whom I see, but who sees me" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 310). Being visible is presented as the most vulnerable condition of the self against the Other. The point is to establish that human existence can never be comprehended as a singular subjective existence. There are always equally powerful other perspectives that may challenge one's free perspective at any moment. Individual freedom, in such perspective becomes limited and situational and hence, the relation between the self and the Other is presented as a conflicting relation as each party tries to establish one's perspective against the Other. The discussions in this chapter is limited to Sartre's early writings, specifically *Being and Nothingness* and some other literary works like *Nausea*, *The Age of Reason*, and plays like *The Flies* and *No Exit*.

### **Chapter-IV: Otherness and Alienation: Sartre and Marx:**

After the Second World War, Sartre's philosophy takes a more socio-political turn where he reformulates the concept of freedom and otherness in conformity with social situation and emphasises on free and conscious human activity in a materialistic environment using the term *praxis* (a term used by Marx), instead of "for-itself". In this shifting phase, rather than getting confined to the literary works, Sartre gets actively involved in the political sphere with a voice against oppression. These changes find

expression in the two volumes of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, along with other pieces like *Materialism and Revolution*, *Between Existentialism and Marxism* etc. Sartre considers the philosophy presented through the two volumes of the *Critique* to be the real philosophy advanced for the concrete human reality. In this phase Sartre includes Marxist explanations into the fold of his individual centered philosophy while dealing with the problems of freedom, alienation and oppression. He also gets involved with the communist party of France supporting the communist agenda to a great extent. These changes give a common impression that Sartre philosophy has got merged to Marxism. Taking this background into consideration this chapter analyses the relation between Sartre's philosophy and Marxism, concentrating on the issue of alienation as treated in both the trends and explains how Sartre accommodates Marxism and what sort of new orientation comes out of it.

#### **Chapter-V: Humanism of the Other: Sartre and Levinas:**

While being vocal against the oppressing tendency of the colonisers, Sartre, in his phase of political engagement even considers violence as justified against the colonising tendency. Does it mean that Sartre's philosophy starts and ends with negative note only? A reply to this is found within Sartre's writings itself. Though individualistic in its earlier tone, Sartre's philosophy in his matured writings shows a social and humanistic turn. Again, even in his individualistic writings he leaves subtle references to the ethical base of individual choice with some universal import. Hence this chapter aims at exploring the ethical outlook of Sartrean philosophy in individuality and in the newer interpretation of Otherness in his later philosophy. The chapter further incorporates the philosophy of Levinas, with his ethics of the Other in order to strengthen the understanding of Sartre's ethical stand.

#### **Chapter-VI: Conclusion:**

This chapter incorporates the summaries of the major findings of previous chapters and at the same time it makes a critical estimation of the entire process of addressing the problem of the Other through the Sartrean perspective.

## CHAPTER- II

### PHENOMENOLOGICAL TRADITION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE OTHER

The Problem of the Other, otherwise known as the issue of intersubjectivity is inseparably related to the phenomenological trend of philosophy. The self-other issue being one of the major problems to be discussed in the continental philosophy debates essentially comes under the purview of this contemporary trend. As noted, “Intersubjectivity, be it the form of a concrete self-other relation, a socially structured life-world, or a transcendental principle of justification, is ascribed an absolutely central role by the phenomenologists. It is, in fact, difficult to point a philosophical tradition that has been more concerned with doing justice to the different aspects of intersubjectivity than phenomenology” (Zahavi, 2005, p. 148)

Taking this as a background, the chapter makes an attempt at tracing the root of the “problem of the Other” in the context of the phenomenological tradition that begins with Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and culminates in Sartre and also in Levinas. Thus, the chapter seeks to reassert the claim that the problem of the Other remains a mystery as ancient as religion itself and it keeps the doors open for raising philosophical questions as old as philosophy itself. The phenomenological tradition also keeps pondering on the very basic question of how one can preserve in eradicable difference while at the same time make genuine contact. Mapping the background of the problem of the Other in the phenomenological tradition it further attempts to critically figure out Jean Paul Sartre’s position in this framework.

#### Part I

##### 2.1. Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980): An Introduction

Born on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1905 in Paris, Sartre is known as one of the greatest French thinkers due to his immense contributions to the fields of philosophy, literature and culture. For the famous dictum “existence precedes essence” (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007) he is called the father of Existentialist philosophy. However, it is not so easy to characterise Sartre fairly in simplistic terms. As noted by Delacampagne, “philosopher, novelist, polemicist and dramatist, leader of existentialist movement, Sartre was the total

intellectual-the mythical figure of French letters that only Voltaire, Hugo and Zola before him had managed to embody this comparable passion”(Delacampagne, 1999, p. 189).

Polished with literary and dramatic imaginations Sartre’s philosophy also incorporates shifting shades. It is difficult to point out any specific feature of Sartrean philosophy. Although his philosophy mostly appears to be a discourse on human freedom, it often reveals to be dialectic of being and nothingness, the solid, constant existence and its negation- the free consciousness. Thus, it is difficult to define his philosophy under a single head. However, the most pertinent way to define his analyses would be that it is the philosophy of ‘man’. Man as free, authentic and active is the subject matter of his philosophical discussions. Though Sartre is famous for his individualistic writings, his tag as a humanistic novelist and socio-political activist is equally acknowledged in the literary circle. The following quotation noted by Simone de Beauvoir presents Sartre, particularly young Sartre in a more expressive manner.

His mind was always alert. Torpor, somnolence, escapism, intellectual dodges and truces, prudence, and respect were all unknown to him. He was interested in everything and never took anything for granted. Confronted with an object, he would look at it straight in the face instead of trying to explain it away with a myth, a word, an impression, or a preconceived idea: he would not let it go until he had grasped all its ins and outs and all its multiple significations. He didn’t ask himself what he ought to think about it, or what it would have been amusing or intelligent to think about it: he simply thought about it....he certainly had no intention of leading the life of a professional literary man; he detested formalities and literary hierarchies, literary “movements,” careers, the rights and duties of the man of letters, and all the stuffy pompousness of life. He couldn’t reconcile himself to the idea of having a profession, colleagues, superiors, of having to observe and impose rules; he would never be a family man, and would never even marry....The work of art or literature was, in his view, an absolute end in itself....He shrugged disdainful shoulders at all metaphysical disputes. He was interested in social and political questions...; but as far as he was concerned, the main

thing was to write and the rest will come later. Besides, at that period he was much more of an anarchist than a revolutionary.

(1974, as cited in Delacampagne, 1999, p. 190)

Sartrean Existentialism is said to be a revolutionary philosophy of the present age, representing man's rebellion against all attempts to ignore or suppress the uniqueness of individual subjectivity. Emphasising on freedom of the individual he holds that to live authentically is to live with free and committed choice. This is aptly expressed through the character of Orestes in the play *The Flies* (1943). Through the character of Orestes, who avenges his father's death by killing his mother and her husband, and admits the responsibility for his act, Sartre tries to claim that man is essentially free and freedom always demands responsibility and commitment. In 1964 Sartre was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature which he refused on the ground that such honours could interfere with a writer's responsibilities to his readers.

Going against essentialism, Sartre holds that man's essence is constituted after his existence in the world by his freely chosen and committed activities. The free and active man is neither guided by any higher authority nor by any set value system. Rather he is compelled to exercise his freedom and shape his own identity which is always in the making, transcending the given situation with his self-chosen action (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007). This is propagated in *The Flies*, where, with the influence of Nietzsche, Sartre argues that there is no God to control human freedom<sup>3</sup>. Sartre's early childhood identity was more dominated by the choice of his grandfather Charles Schweitzer, who restricted Sartre from making friends with anyone of his age (Sartre J. P., 1964). This made Sartre to seek the companionship of the books in his grandfather's library. It may be said that this confinement and domination in his early childhood made him draw a different picture of freedom and individuality which sometimes reveals to be much exaggerated and aggressive.

Sartre centres round the essence-less man whose identity remains always incomplete and in the making. Hence, his philosophy also seems to be in continuous making till the last days of his life. Though Sartre is claimed to be a metaphysician of

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<sup>3</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Flies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Flies), accessed on 24/2/ 2014.

subjectivity (Priest; 2001) for his emphasis on the ontology of the individual self, he addresses the problem of the Other with equal significance. While in his earlier writings he puts more emphasis on absolute freedom of the atomic individual considering every other person as an object to be dominated, he gradually breaks through the confined world of the individual after the Second World War as he is found considering the cohesive nature of intersubjective relations where individuals open up towards the Other. This gives a decisive turn to his thinking and presents him as a socialist and Marxist philosopher for whom other persons are not threat but associates who assist each other in order to work together in a group in order to achieve some common goal. However, Sartre never compromised with the issue of individual freedom in any condition.

Sartre is primarily known as an existentialist for his style of philosophising which addresses the fundamental problems of human existence like choice, anxiety, freedom, responsibility, commitment and the meaning of existence itself. Nevertheless, Sartre's philosophy has never remained confined to existentialism alone. In *The Psychology of Imagination*(1940) Sartre applies the phenomenological doctrine of intentionality to imagination and considers imagination to be as real as the concrete worldly objects. Further in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*(1939) he considers emotion to be an intentional act and holds that to choose an emotion is to be responsible for it. Sartre's argument on the issue of the Other is based on such an emotion, i.e. shame. Such synthesis leads to the consideration of Sartre's philosophy as a fusion of existentialism and phenomenology which is called as "Existential Phenomenology". It is said to be phenomenological for his engaged discussion of consciousness in clarifying the subject's relation to the lived world.

## **2.2. The Phenomenological movement: Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas**

Phenomenology, the movement in the European philosophy that started during 1900-1901, is defined as a new way of doing philosophy regarding the concrete living experiences of man, contrary to the traditional abstract metaphysical speculations. The prime emphasis of phenomenological investigations always hover around the appearances of 'sameness' and 'difference' (Wyschogrod & Mc kenny, 2003), meaning the relation between subjectivity and the appearing phenomenon established through its core doctrine of intentionality. Etymologically, the term 'phenomenology' can be broken

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into three terms, viz. 'phe', 'nomenon' and 'logy' which are derived from the Greek words 'phos' meaning 'light', 'nomos' suggesting law or normative rules and 'logos' indicating language concerning presentation or account respectively (Wyschogrod & Mc kenny, 2003). A phenomenon is something that appears or that comes to light. It is something that we can experience directly. Thus the term "phenomenology" particularly refers to the "logos of phenomena", meaning truth of the immediate experience. It recognises the reality of the phenomenon, and claims that "the way things appear is a part of the being of things; things appear as they are, and they are as they appear. Things do not just exist; they also manifest themselves as what they are." (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 14). However, rather than concentrating on the phenomenon that appears, phenomenology emphasises on the process of appearing. It draws our attention "to the things themselves", meaning, a thing is attempted at in its way of appearing (Wyschogrod & Mc kenny, 2003, pp. 68-69).

Phenomenology, as a new way of doing philosophy, was first formally announced by Edmund Husserl in his book *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901). Husserl, the pioneer of this tradition, defines phenomenology as an *a priori* transcendental science of pure consciousness. With an attempt to give philosophy a kind of logical and mathematical truth, Husserl, through phenomenology, gives a newer interpretation to epistemological problems. In the Kantian sense, through phenomenology, Husserl also attempts to address the objects or things that exist in the world exactly in the manner in which they appear to us. Husserl's phenomenological understanding grew out of his attempt to understand the nature of logical and mathematical truths. However, going beyond this confined periphery he announced phenomenology as a pure eidetic science, a science which would provide the essential grounding for all scientific knowledge without depending on any previous knowledge system. Gradually he extended the field of enquiry to everything which appears to consciousness and it became a set of 'infinite tasks' contributing to all material regions of being, every field of 'material essences' from geometry to morality (Moran, 2000, p. 124). The Phenomenologists are, thus, free to all areas of experience without any limit.

Introducing the doctrine of intentionality of consciousness, where consciousness is necessarily bound to the world of objects, phenomenologists emphasises on reviving

our contact with reality taking our mindset away from the arid academic discussion of philosophical problems found in nineteenth century philosophy (Moran, 2000). It not only rejects the traditional rationalist and idealist account of reality, but also goes against the reductionist model of human experiences of nineteenth century empiricism and positivism which is blamed of distorting the true nature of human experience by maintaining a distinctive concept of subject-object polarisation. Thus, contrary to the narrow traditional philosophy, Phenomenology claims to offer a holistic approach to the relation between objectivity and consciousness. It studies conscious experiences as experienced from the first person's perspective.

### 2.2.1. Intentionality

Intentionality, as per the phenomenological approach, can be defined as the salient structure of our conscious experience. Emphasis on intentionality is a radical attempt by Husserl to overcome the subject-object divide through the introduction of a deeper sense into subjectivity itself. It serves as the main connecting feature between the subject pole (the conscious being) and the object pole (the phenomenal world or the world of experience) which were not considered to be so closely connected with the traditional philosophical discussions. Husserl discovered the intentional structure of consciousness and took a radical step to introduce the theme of intentionality to phenomenology out of his understanding of the necessary relation between the subjectivity and objectivity. The structure of consciousness, as Husserl points out, is its 'aboutness'. Consciousness is always intentional in character as it always intends an object, without composing any part of the object (Sartre J. , 1936/1991). Consciousness cannot be meaningful without its reference to any concrete object of experience or the phenomenon. Hence, subjectivity must be understood as inextricably involved in the process of constituting objectivity. Through the notion of intentionality of consciousness borrowed from Franz Brentano, Husserl emphasises the notion of objectivity-for-subjectivity, maintaining that consciousness is always consciousness of something (Moran, 2000, p. 16).

In order to establish phenomenology as the eidetic science of pure consciousness Husserl uses the method of *epoché* to be applied in different levels of conscious experience. In *Ideas I*, concentrating on the essence of consciousness and the intentional

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object, he introduces the terms *noema* and *noesis*, meaning, the object as meant and the intentional act that presents the object as meant. In this process bracketing the natural world, Husserl concentrates on the noetic process where instead of the real object the essence of the object is captured. Husserl claims that the phenomenon, unlike the factual objects, has got some *apriori* characters (essential nature) which cannot be grasped by ordinary perception, but only by essential intuition or “essential seeing” (as cited in Moran, 2000, p 134). Referring to Husserl, Moran (2000) notes,

My experience of an object often contains, as part of that very experience, my sense that the object actually is beyond or outside the experience, and has aspects other than the ones I am now apprehending. The notion of grasping the essence is to grasp something which has transcendence and immanence. (as cited in Moran, 2000, p. 133)

Thus, the task of phenomenology, according to Husserl, is to describe the essence of an object as it is given to consciousness. Through phenomenology “Husserl hopes to discover the essence of consciousness, essence of perception, the essence of physical objects and so on. Objects are shown to be transcendently constituted by consciousness. That there is an objective world available to us is argued to be an achievement of consciousness” (Priest, 2001, pp. 58-59). Instead of assuming that the meaning of an object is inherent in the object, Husserlian phenomenology thus gets meaning only in relation to the subject (Bologh, 1979). Thus, coming out of the subject-object division phenomenology brings in the concept of constituting constituted where one is inseparable from other. However, Husserl’s intention of describing the phenomenon in its pure sense is not yet satisfied. He somehow realises that there may still remain some scope through which human preconceptions may somehow affect the pure phenomenon. Hence searching for a new point of departure he brackets the human consciousness and concentrates on a transcendental *ego* which is beyond all empirical or psychological human states (Moran, 2000, p. 137).

### **2.2.2. Transcendental Turn in Husserlian Phenomenology**

The nature of the subject gets complicated in Husserl’s phenomenology as soon as he tries to interchange it with the transcendental *ego*. While, in the *Logical*

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*Investigations* Husserl denies the necessity of an *ego* as the source of the stream of consciousness, till 1913 he takes a transcendental turn and advances the concept of the transcendental *ego* as the transcendental realm or ‘absolute source’ of consciousness characterising each mental process or intentional act as an act of the *ego*. The *ego*, as Husserl hints, can either be interpreted as the source to which the intentional acts belong, or as the principle of self-awareness or as an active synthesiser of intentional acts. Whatever be the *ego*’s nature, it is clear that Husserlian *ego* is something more than the empirical, psychological human subject. It is claimed that even after bracketing the empirical human subject as a constituted phenomenon in the world, Husserl restores something like a ‘privileged first person’ as the owner of consciousness or intentional activities (Mohanty, 2006, p. 24). However, it is not to be considered in a strict sense, since Husserl always retains the empirical world along with the *ego*. In the final reduction, Husserl even goes further to the concept of genetic transcendental *ego* where the *ego* may even turn to be object under the higher *ego*.

### **2.2.2.1. Critical inputs from Heidegger and others**

Pertaining to Husserl’s emphasis on essence, his phenomenology is criticised of being more relevant to the field of logic or mathematics rather than to the concrete issues of human affairs. Criticising Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) opens up a new practical dimension of phenomenology concerning our ordinary life experiences. Heidegger shifts the purpose of phenomenological investigation from the analysis of the structure of consciousness to the structure of everyday life, to being-in-the-world. Heidegger finds the phenomenology of Husserl to be nothing but another unsatisfactory solution to the problem of the external world as almost similar to the positions of Berkeley and Kant. He does not conform to the views of Husserl considering them to be offsprings of the Cartesian epistemological position (Philipse, 1999, p. 117). Altering Husserl, Heidegger drops the idea of transcendental consciousness and interprets phenomenology as the attempt to make manifest the matters or objects as they manifest themselves (Moran, 2000, p. 227). Concentrating on the fundamental meaning of the Greek terms ‘phenomenon’ and ‘logos’ in *Being and Time* (1927), he presents the meaning of phenomenology as “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (Philipse, 1999, p. 118). In Husserlian

sense what we directly perceive will be interpreted as material for intentional activity of the *ego*, rather than as object having characters in its own right (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, p. 10). But, Contrary to Husserl, Heidegger levies the objects with its qualities to make it sensed. Referring to Heidegger's phenomenology Moran (2000) notes,

In *Being and Time* Heidegger drops all Husserl's central concepts: he no longer talks of consciousness, objectivity, directedness...the transcendental *ego*. He does not refer to the natural attitude, to the *epoché* and reduction. Instead Heidegger wanted to employ phenomenology as the proper mode of access to the phenomena of concrete human life,.....a way of thinking about human nature that remained faithful to the *historical, lived, practical* nature of human experience.(Moran, 2000, pp. 227-228)

#### **2.2.2.2. Heidegger on intentionality**

Defending the thesis of intentionality against the Husserlian version, Heidegger tries to give it a concrete historical interpretation. While Husserl presents it as a component of the structure of the subject, Heidegger interprets it to be neither objective nor subjective. Rather, intentionality according to Heidegger is prior to and more original than the subject and the object (Mohanty, 2006). Emphasising on the ontological status of intentionality Heidegger holds that it is because intentionality belongs to the existence of the *Dasein* that the subject can relate to the object outside coming out of its immanence. "It is the nature of *Dasein* that it exists in such a way that it is always already with other beings" (Mohanty, 2006, p. 73). Where Husserl emphasises on the essence of the object and on the objectivity with all the meaning giving layers of the object, Heidegger emphasises on the fact.

#### **2.2.2.3 Levinas on Intentionality**

Further reinterpretation of intentionality comes from Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) and J.P. Sartre (1905-1980). While Levinas is known to be one of the most prominent of Husserl's interpreters in France, Jean-Paul Sartre also shares the same significance in the field followed by other prominent French philosophers like Merleau

Ponty and Derrida. Levinas, like Sartre, considers phenomenology as a philosophy which has restored human being to the world, bringing him out of the image of an isolated *ego*. But he finds Husserl's understanding of intentionality as being caught in the paradigm of knowledge as a kind of possession or grasping of its object. According to him our act of thinking itself is a transition towards the object which essentially overcomes the barrier of subjectivity. But if the focus is kept limited to the subjective side of thinking, like Husserl, then it certainly becomes one sided ignoring our primary situation of a lived relation with others. Levinas considers Husserl's definition of intentionality as a distortion of human experience and intensifies a search for a phenomenology beyond intentionality (Moran, 2000). However, preserving the sense of intentionality as presented by Husserl, Sartre gives it a more significant place by identifying it with consciousness.

### 2.2.3. Jean Paul Sartre as a Phenomenologist

Sartre got interested in phenomenology through Levinas' translation of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*. Sartre admits that Husserl has liberated us from the "inward life" and restored to us the reality of the world of objects (Bhadra, 2004, p. 343). Nevertheless, like Heidegger and Levinas, he also applies Husserl's phenomenological method in a modified form. In his early studies of 1930s, Sartre is found to be extracting his own way of philosophising by critically interpreting the Husserlian phenomenological trend. Husserlian phenomenological themes which Sartre rejects are: the transcendental *ego*, the essentialism and the *epoché*. In *The Transcendence of the Ego* published in 1936-1937 Sartre criticises Husserl's notion of *ego*-centric consciousness and emphasises on the existence of consciousness in a pre-reflective manner before the *ego*'s being aware of it.

Sartre wonders why there was this need for an additional item as a Transcendental *ego* that remained the source of first person centric phenomenological experiences associated with an "I" and "mine", as Husserl could have very well continued with his pre-transcendental position that explained the unity and cohesiveness of conscious life in terms of 'time-consciousness' that Husserl has already done. Sartre substantiates his point further with illustration from a clinical psychological case of a newly married young woman who had suffered from anxiety when in her husband's

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absence she found that she could have acted as a prostitute by signalling the passersby. She finally failed to do that because of her failure to reconcile with this idea in her mind of a possible actualisation of an absurd fancy that she can very well do as a free individual in her own right, as her *ego*, in essence was incapable of any such act of betrayal. But this incident proves that even if the *ego* remains the essence then it is still preceded by 'freedom', that is 'existence', and in her effort at bracketing that freedom, she found that her essence, the *ego*, too is vulnerable and constituted as well.

If her faithfulness is said to be due to her *ego* identity she could not have thought of being unfaithful at any point of time. Rather, it is her radical freedom that she exercises in her thought of being unfaithful. Her anxiety and the act of unfaithfulness imply that her freedom works over her *ego*. Hence, remaining faithful is not an act of the *ego* but of her free choice laden with responsibility. Sartre considers the *ego* as nothing but a "mask to hide freedom" which may lead to bad faith. Sartre's argument to bring the *ego* down to the world of factual objects is explained by Busch (1999) in the following words.

In this thematisation of radical freedom in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre can be viewed as translating the *epoché* from the epistemic role it primarily served in Husserl's Phenomenology, to an existential role of facing up to one's freedom in a process of identity creation: the *epoché* is no longer a miracle, an intellectual method, an *eidetic* procedure: it is an anxiety which is imposed on us and which we cannot avoid. (p. 298)

Thus, expelling the *ego* from the "transcendental field" he places it on the same level with other objects, and tries to ground the autonomy of unreflective consciousness (Delacampagne, 1999, p. 191). According to Sartre, if behind every conscious act the role of the transcendental *ego* is admitted, then it will entail certain contents of consciousness which are to be referred while addressing the object. But, this will distort the basic aim which Husserl set for phenomenology. Sartre denies the possibility of the so called transcendental *ego* 'in' or 'behind' consciousness. Rather, the *ego* is out there in the world as an object of experience among other objects. Contrary to Husserl's transcendental *ego*, Sartre, thus, presents the *ego* as 'transcendent' (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, p. 53), having its existence outside the structure of consciousness (Catalano, 1985).

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Where Husserl's transcendental *ego* remains beyond experience as the uniter of conscious acts, Sartre's *ego* is an empirical one like any ordinary object which can be experienced. Hence, according to Sartre, there is nothing called "my consciousness" but only "consciousness of me" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992).

This is based on the primacy of the pre-reflective consciousness. Criticising Husserl's emphasis on reflective consciousness, Sartre presents the pre-reflective consciousness to be more important for understanding human reality. If human reality is to be understood as being-in-the-world, then activities in this world are also to be understood in the pre-conceptual, practical ways. As Sartre says, "existence-precedes-essence", so object precedes the consciousness of it. Consciousness, being object directed, depends on the object for its being and such object consciousness is always pre-reflective, without the self involved in it. Sartre holds that consciousness of the object precedes the consciousness of the self. According to him, we are always indirectly conscious of the self in our direct consciousness of the object. With the example of reading Sartre explains that while reading a book my consciousness gets merged in reading without being conscious that I am reading. The *I* appears indirectly only when one reflects on it. It appears at the level of humanity representing the active 'me' (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, p. 36). To quote Sartre, "When I run after the streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no *I*. There is consciousness of the *streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken*, etc. and non-positional consciousness of consciousness" (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, pp. 48-49). Thus, with the initial rejection of Descartes argument that "I think therefore I am", Sartre differentiates the pre-reflective or non-thetic or non-positional consciousness from the thetic or positional one which reflects upon its own acts. The consciousness which asserts "I am" is not the same as the one that thinks. "Such a *Cogito* is performed by consciousness, *directed upon consciousness*, a consciousness which takes consciousness as an object" (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, p. 44).

The reason behind the consideration of the *ego* to be something privileged is the tendency to confuse "the essential structure of reflective consciousness with the essential structure of unreflected acts" (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, p. 55). The *ego* here is nothing but the body subject, the embodied me- the centre of all activities. Whenever we refer to

'me' or 'mine', the reference is made to the *body-subject* which is also an object of consciousness. Thus the *I* does not appear until we reflect upon our prior acts. This non-reflective and impersonal consciousness is primary in which the Other and the *ego* emerges. Accordingly, Sartre claims the Cartesian *cogito* and Husserlian *ego* to be ultimately derived objects that result from our reflection on our total human condition (Catalano, 1985, p. 12).

Arguing for a newer interpretation of consciousness and intentionality, Sartre holds that consciousness has no content. It neither contains the transcendental *ego*, nor anything else. Sartre's Existential phenomenology is an intense repudiation of Husserl's essentialism. While Husserl grounds things in essential necessity, Sartre emphasises on contingency of objects. Sartre, thus, rejects Husserl's essentialism and the phenomenological *epoché* as they imply that conscious states can be studied in abstraction from their real objects in the world (Priest, 2001). Following the Heideggerian structure of human reality as being-in-the-world, Sartre holds that consciousness can never be separated from the real world of objects (Priest, 2001). Rather its entire being consists in its directedness towards the object or the world. It is total emptiness which always intends towards object. Being intentional in nature it totally blows outside itself; it is never self-contained. Consciousness is said to be a revealed revelation, which always needs an object to reveal (Wright, n.d). Thus Sartre reinterprets the notion of intentionality of consciousness.

While Husserl considers intentionality as one essential feature of consciousness, Sartre identifies intentionality with consciousness itself (Sartre J. , 1936/1991, p. 22). "All physical, psycho-physical and psychic objects, all truths, all values are outside consciousness. Hence, consciousness being intentional is nothing" (Bhadra, 2004, p. 342). Sartre is criticised by Merleau Ponty for considering consciousness to be totally object directed. According to him, consciousness cannot grasp its object in totality, as consciousness's total merge with the object would mean "death of consciousness" for him (Mohanty, 2006, p. 75). Ponty regards consciousness as always a matter of degrees. In order to clarify Sartre's stand against this criticism it will be required to throw light on Sartre's matured work. In the post War period Sartre is found to be modifying his concept of consciousness incorporating the dialectical method onto the fold.

In this phase, emphasising on the role of the *practico-inert* in shaping individual choice in a materialistic society, Sartre is found maintaining a dialectic method in Marx's way reconciling Kierkegaardian subjectivity and Hegelian objectivity. If death of the subjective consciousness is possible, then it may be in the structuralists' version where complete objectification of consciousness is emphasised within certain structures. But Sartre's position is not like that. Where the structuralists suggest complete termination of the subject, Sartre through the dialectic preserves a definite role for the free subject. This is aptly expressed in his last work, *The Family Idiot* (1971), where the journey of Flaubert goes on even amidst adverse situations as he transforms the social conditionings and the miseries of psychic determination into active and free choices, into his praxis (Busch, 1999, p. 305).

In this background we may say that Ponty's criticism does not hold truth since the death of consciousness in being object directed is an absurd issue. Consciousness being object directed does not become the object; rather it is referred to as consciousness of the object, not the object itself. It is only a directedness, not merging or sinking into it. Further, the aspect of non-thetical consciousness is also aligned with it.

Sartre got interested in fusing phenomenology with existentialism as it could offer a methodological way to focus on our everyday experiences and thereby to understand the conscious self in a better way. However, though Sartre appears to be more Husserlian in his way of philosophising, emphasising more on consciousness in its different shades, it is to be noted that consciousness for Sartre is not a confined subjectivity as the *ego* of Husserl; it is rather inseparably engaged with the world as that of Heidegger. Hence, Sartre's phenomenology is said to be appearing as a hybrid version of Husserl and Heidegger (Earnshaw, 2006, p. 137). Husserl insisted on bracketing and suspending natural attitude in order to concentrate on the phenomenon. He argued that it was necessary to ignore what is in order to reveal what appears to be- the phenomenon (Priest, 2001, p. 106). Whereas, contra Husserl, Heidegger rather made intentionality an ontological structure of the *Dasein*. Sartre seems to dwell in between these two as he emphasises both on phenomenology as well as on ontology giving his *magnum opus* *Being and Nothingness* the subtitle "*an essay in phenomenological ontology*". The rejection of the transcendental *ego* and concentration on intentionality in its original

sense lead Sartre directly to emphasise on human existential affairs, and thus, to propound existentialism as a philosophy of human existence. Challenging the abstract logical theorisation of Husserl's phenomenology, Sartre is found to be concentrating on the concrete human dilemmas, human emotions and human conflict, a shift from essence to concrete facts, as discussed in the phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness*.

### **2.3. Phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness*: Man, defined in a newer way**

Sartre's philosophy is basically an interplay between the two central themes-- being and non-being, furnished with the notions of freedom, nothingness, authenticity, bad faith and so on, which he discusses extensively in his *magnum opus Being and Nothingness* (1943). Hence, in order to have a grasp of the pertinent themes of Sartrean philosophy the best way is to go through the analysis of the concept of 'being' and 'nothingness'. Hegelian influence on Sartre becomes prominent in the two themes on which Sartre has formulated his huge philosophical argumentation.

Further, the title of Sartre's master work *Being and Nothingness- An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* itself reflects the indebtedness of Sartre's philosophy to that of Husserl and Heidegger, as in this book he applies the Husserlian phenomenological method of description in a radical way in order to give a fundamental description of Being and thus plunges into Heideggerian ontology on the other edge (Catalano, 1985). The concepts of being and non-being appear to be the direct offshoots of Sartre's interpretation of intentionality. It is necessary to understand in what sense Sartre used the term 'being' before going to delve into the issue of non-being.

As Spalletta (2012) notes, Sartre uses the term 'being' in the sense of the appearance of an object. As noted, there is no difference between 'being' and 'appearance' which is unfortunately maintained by earlier philosophers. Being, according to him, does not refer to anything hidden or that hides. Referring to Sartre he holds that being of an object is rather the appearance of it--how it appears. The essence of an object is also said to refer to its appearance itself.

After clearly refuting spiritualism and materialism as oversimplifications of the human condition, Sartre starts with matter as the only existent. From this point he delves into the issue of nothingness as the only pole which distinguishes man from being purely material in nature. Thus refuting the existence of God or any spirit Sartre emphasises on the existence of matter and nothingness as the negation of it. This is what leads to the distinction between being and nothingness—the world and man on the other side standing as the free conscious being refuting the determinations of the worldly conditions. The term ‘being’ is used by Sartre mostly to mean “that which is most basic to any reality”. “Thus according to Sartre being is that which distinguishes reality from nothingness and which is the foundation of all other aspects of being including essence”(Catalano, 1985, p. 13).

As already mentioned, besides Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre’s philosophy carries prominent influence of Hegel to a considerable extent. Sartre’s concepts of being and nothingness are found to be phenomenologically polished concepts over Hegel’s concepts of being and non-being. For Hegel, pure being and pure non-being are one and the same. He furnishes his notion of pure being with the characteristics of pure indeterminateness, pure emptiness; without relation, externality or content. Automatically while describing pure being with all these negative characters or absences, Hegel plunges into pure non-being as identical with pure being and thus presents them to be dependent on each other(Cox, 2006, pp. 4-5). Ultimately, following Heraclitus, Hegel also merges both being and non-being with becoming in a process of dialectical evolution.

Here, Sartre goes opposite to Hegel. Sartre, though influenced by Hegel in borrowing the terminologies, never considers being and non-being to be mutually dependent. He accepts the existential reality of only one thing that is matter; the rest are just the negation of it. Hence, according to him, being is the matter, the only existent and non-being or nothingness is the negation of it; it is what it is not. Without referring to the reality we cannot refer to the negation of it. Hence nothingness is dependent on being. It does not have any independent existence. As Sartre holds,

Nothingness can be conceived neither outside of being, nor as a  
complementary, abstract notion, nor as an infinite milieu where being is

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suspended. Nothingness must be given at the heart of being. Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being like a worm. (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 56)

Being has logical precedence over nothingness and nothingness is logically subsequent to being as 'being denied'. Reinterpreting Hegel's concepts Sartre holds that where being is empty of all determination than identity with itself, non-being is empty of being, which Hegel did not state clearly. Thus nothingness always supposes being first in order to deny it. Preceding nothingness being establishes the ground for nothingness. It is from being that nothingness derived its efficacy (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 49).

Being, in Sartre's interpretation, reveals two aspects, viz. i) being of an object and ii) being of consciousness, representing two modes of the self before its interaction with the Other. Referring to the distinction between being of consciousness and being of non-conscious objects as intentional and non-intentional, Sartre presents two types of being in *Being and Nothingness* as "being-for-itself" (*pour-soi*) and "being-in-itself" (*en-soi*), the conscious and non-conscious respectively to which he adds a third one later, called "being-for-others" (*pour-autrui*), which can roughly be said to represent the dominated "for-itself". Sartre's phenomenological thesis precisely moves round the dialectical relation between these two integral modes of being. It is not that there is a "for-itself" on the one hand and a world on the other. Rather, they are two close entities and hence it is not necessary to find any explanation as to how they communicate. The "for-itself" is a relation to the world (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 405).

### 2.3.1. "Being-in-itself" (*en-soi*)

"Being-in-itself" can be interpreted as undifferentiated stuff that is full of positivity. It does not have the capacity to reflect on itself as self consciousness has. "Being-in-itself" is opaque, complete and wholly filled in itself. It is simply what it is, whereas, on the contrary "being-for-itself" or consciousness is defined as being what it is not. The "in-itself" has nothing to reveal from within since it has nothing in secret. The terms like transition, becoming etc. which suggest some processes of growth are outside of it on principle. "Being-in-itself" knows no otherness (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992). It is the undifferentiated mass prior to human perspective. It cannot be exemplified by making

reference to any object since an object gets named only when it gets interpreted by human consciousness. “Being-in-itself” needs no reference to human consciousness for its existence. It serves as the background condition for objects to appear (Spalletta, 2012). But it is to be noted that in our ordinary living rather than experiencing the undifferentiated stuff, we experience the differentiated objects like tree, house, pen, pencil etc. which clearly mark that this is not that, a tree is a tree not a house and vice versa.

“Being-in-itself”, being the undifferentiated stuff, full of positivity has no negative element in its structure and hence, the negativity or the extra mundane nothingness cannot be produced by “being-in-itself”. Moreover, according to Sartre, “nothingness is not, nothingness is ‘made-to-be’, nothingness does not nihilate itself, and rather it gets nihilated” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 56). Since nothingness has no existing reality or being of its own, since it is a borrowed being, it cannot be granted the property of nihilating itself. Then how does nothingness come into picture? It leads, therefore, to the intuition that “being-in-itself” gets affected by some other being, a being of which the property is to nihilate. Here appears the second mode of being, the being of consciousness which Sartre calls “being-for-itself” (*pour-soi*).

### **2.3.2. “Being-for-itself” (*pour-soi*)**

“Being-for-itself” is called the being of consciousness. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre presents it as consciousness having the capacity to carve out the phenomenal world by differentiating one object from another out of the undifferentiated stuff or “being-in-itself”. Sartre defines “being-for-itself” as conscious, non-identical, essence less and contentless mode of being which always transcends towards the meaning of its being. According to Sartre, consciousness is always consciousness of something and the mode of being of such consciousness is to be “for-itself”. There is no unconscious starting point to attempt at consciousness to be known. Sartre rather emphasises on the existence of a pre-reflective, non-objectifying form of consciousness that exists prior to the reflective consciousness and serves as the constitutive moment of the original form of intentional experience (Zahavi, 2011, p. 215). Sartre identifies human reality with consciousness calling it the “being-for-itself”. The “for-itself” is always conscious of not

being the “in-itself”, which is full of content, static, non-conscious, passive and non-free. More appropriately, it is defined as the embodied consciousness or the active body-subject. Though in *Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre considers the self to be impersonal, later characterising consciousness by its self-reference called *ipseity* in *Being and Nothingness* he considers it to be personal in structure. The *ego*’s being an existent in the world does not necessarily imply its impersonal nature.

Sartre insists that ““Being-for-itself” must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness”, a body that is “wholly psychic” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 404). Being wholly psychic and wholly consciousness it is the internal negation of the “in-itself”. While “being-in-itself” is what it is, “being-for-itself” is “not what it is and it is what it is not” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 127). The ontological foundation of the “being-for-itself” is to be presence to itself. It is all the time negating and inventing its identity; it is not wholly itself. This implies that the being of consciousness never coincides with itself in a full equivalence (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992). While “being-in-itself” is defined as fullness without slightest hint of duality, “being-for-itself” is defined as dual in nature. It is a lack which always transcends to fulfil its possibilities. This ‘lack’ implies the feature of nothingness in “being-for-itself”.

### **2.3.3. Consciousness as nothingness**

Nothingness is not an external feature to be imposed from outside rather it is an inbuilt feature of the “for-itself”. Nothingness lies in the heart of being like a worm. The being of consciousness *qua* consciousness is to exist at a distance from itself being presence to itself, and it is this emptiness, this distance which being inheres, is called *nothingness*. Sartre clarifies that it is only man or the human reality through which nothingness comes into being, since man is the only being who can expect, question and desire, going beyond the given state of existence (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992). Sartre shows that it is the attitude of man which can bring nothingness into things. He explains it with the example of Pierre’s absence in a café. While Pierre’s presence is firmly expected in the café, he is not there. As a result, the entire café even after its being full with tables, chairs and other people around turned to be nothing. So Sartre realises, “It is Pierre rising himself as nothingness on the ground of the nihilation of the café” (Sartre J. P.,

1943/1992, p. 42). With various examples Sartre shows that it is not through the Hegelian dialectical process that nothingness comes into being, rather it is man, the human reality, endowed with the attitude of nothingness that brings nothingness into things.

Thus, ontologically explained, Sartrean phenomenological ontology brings in being of consciousness or “being-for-itself” as nothingness, as the nihilation of “being-in-itself” and further nothingness brings in the concept of freedom, adding to the structure of human reality. Since entire being is on the side of the object or the “in-itself”, consciousness is total “nothingness”. Thus, according to Sartre, the “for-itself” being nothingness, and having no essence given, it is free to create its own essence. In order to question the process, man must be able to put himself outside of being and affect being from outside. According to Sartre, man’s relation to the being is to modify it (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 60). This particular structure of man of inflicting nothingness into being remaining outside the process, is called freedom.

#### **2.3.4. Freedom**

While defining man, Sartre holds that man’s “existence precedes essence”; emphasising on freedom, he further stresses that rather it is man’s freedom that precedes his essence. It is not that in order to be free man exists first and becomes free in a subsequent moment. Rather he insists that man exists as freedom. Hence rather than defining freedom as one of the properties of man, Sartre defines man as freedom. He argues,

I am indeed an existent who learns his freedom through his acts, but I am also an existent whose individual and unique existence temporalises itself as freedom. As such I am necessarily a consciousness (of) freedom since nothing exists in consciousness except as the non-thetic consciousness of existing. Thus ...my freedom is not a quality added on or a *property* of my nature. It is very exactly the stuff of my being.... (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 566)

According to Sartre, freedom is an intrinsic and necessary feature of the human condition. The permanent possibility of the nihilating rupture between the world and

himself which human reality realises all the time is the same as freedom (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 567). Sartre holds that human reality is free because it is *not enough*. It is free because it is always separated by nothingness from itself; it is not itself but presence to itself and hence it is not what it is and it is what it is not. Sartre does not prefer to define free will as a mere state of consciousness. Rather, according to him, will, if it is free, must be necessarily negativity and the power of nihilation (Wright, n.d.).

Negation and imagination play major roles in Sartre's explanation of consciousness and freedom. Sartre lays down the concept of nihilism in his book *The Psychology of Imagination* (1940) as that which connects our ability to imagine a non-existent object or to nihilate it with consciousness and this displays essential nothingness of consciousness. However, Sartre is criticised for connecting nothingness with freedom in a strange way. Criticising Sartre, Jayant Burde (2009) argues that in Sartre's interpretation the power to imagine implies freedom. For Sartre, "the unreal is produced outside the world by a consciousness which *stays in the world*, and it is because man is transcendently free that man can imagine" (Burde, 2008, p. 181). Nevertheless, imagination in Sartre's explanation is not something absurd; it always has a link with the concrete existing object. Phenomenology emphasises on different perspectives of an object. Through imagination Sartre claims to have opened up the possibility of such perspectives only. The idea is that "every concrete and real situation of consciousness in the world is pregnant with imagination in as much as it always presents itself as a withdrawing from the real"(Priest, 2001, p. 101). Imagination is used as interplay between the seen and imagined.

Freedom with the structure of negation and imagination gives a new image to the definition of man as "being-for-itself", the active and engaged consciousness. Human reality, Sartre argues, being nothingness or freedom, is free from the cage of predefined human nature determined by any authority. Since there is no God according to Sartre, there is no possibility of having any pre-determined essence in case of man. It is not possible to design the essence of man the way the essence of an object is determined before its existence. Man is always beyond the given name or identity. He is always essence-less at the beginning. Whatever its essence or identity may be that always remains in making. Hence, in case of man, Sartre holds that his "existence precedes

essence” (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 22). Like Heidegger, Sartre also holds that man is thrown into the world and abandoned in a situation where he can only confront nothingness. There is no God to control his fate, no principle to influence human values. The only principle is to work, to get engaged in order to get the identity of man. According to Sartre, by the very existence one escapes any reliance on anything for his identity. One starts surpassing the givens and lives as transcendence going beyond the given background or *facticity* of one’s reality that comes along in the form of his culture, tradition, environment, language etc. Being one’s own nothingness man is forever beyond his existence. His essence is always in making. First of all man exists and then he makes his own essence by exercising his freedom. “Man is nothing other than his own project...he is nothing more than his sum of actions...” (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 37). Emphasising absolute individual freedom, in *Being and Nothingness* he holds that there is no limit of human freedom except freedom itself. Nothing readymade is there for him either to receive or to accept. The very being of man is freedom. Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all. He is abandoned in a situation where from he has to rise by choosing himself. Because, “...for human reality to be is to *choose oneself*” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, pp. 568-69).

Man is “condemned to be free” (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 29). He is condemned because there is no way to escape responsibility except self-deception called “bad faith”. Man has no meaning without the exercise of freedom and without choice. He cannot escape choosing because even not to choose also constitutes a choice (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 44). It is only man who is separate from this objective world by structure. Though being a physical object he is one in the world, being consciousness he can always question and go beyond it. There is no other way to define man except his freedom. He is compelled to invent himself every day. These views, expressed in *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1947), are found accomplished through the characters of *No Exit* (1944). Garcin complains of not being able to make a good image of himself during his lifetime as he died too soon. Inez replies, “One always dies too soon- or too late. And yet one’s whole life is complete at that moment, with a line drawn under it, ready for the summing up. You are—your life and nothing else” (as cited in Wreszin, 1961, p. 44). Sartre shows that it is within our life time that we create our image through our activities. There is no possibility to change or improve this image once the life is

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over. This becomes evident through the characters of *No Exit* who violate morality of freedom in their lifetime and after death (in the hell) they unsuccessfully try to recreate their image in the eyes of the Other.

#### 2.3.4.1. A Critical estimation of Freedom

Sartre's concept of freedom has never been accepted uncritically. It has often been criticised as radical, unrealistic, dreadful and pessimistic (Santoni, 2008) (Morazain, 1973). However, critics like Wreszin (1961) claim Sartre to be one of the most important moralists. Sartre's morality is hidden in his most criticised concept of freedom. It is due to the failure of critics to understand the concept, as a result of which the positive side of it remains unattended. By identifying man as freedom, Sartre has not issued a certificate for being uncontrolled; rather, through the concept he has propounded a philosophy of engagement. Protecting the *ipseity* (selfhood) Sartre prevents consciousness from getting reduced to a narrative identity only. *Iipseity* is the ethical dimension of the self "where the question of self-identity is a question of *accountability* and *responsibility*" (as cited in Zahavi, 2005, p. 114). Hence, the conscious self in Sartre is an active and ethical self.

There is no God to create and hold an image of man. It is man himself who is responsible to create his image in an intersubjective platform by choosing his project. However, such free choices cannot be chaotic. One's choice is said to be authentic only when it is made with committed freedom by admitting responsibility for it. A choice is to be made keeping in mind human subjectivity as a whole. Sartre necessarily talks about an intersubjective society where one has to choose keeping in mind that while he is choosing he is choosing for mankind as a whole. Because the human condition- to be in the world, to work, to live among others, and to die-is same for all of us (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 42). Under these conditions, being a man, one represents the entire mankind as a whole. Hence, free choices cannot be the choice of one single individual. This can also provide a reply to Albert Camus who accuses Sartre of portraying human characters with "excess liberty", where the human being remains "alone, enclosed in his own liberty" (Santoni, 2008, p. 795). Sartre presents this broader sense of choice through his play *The Flies* (1943). Orestes, the central character in *The Flies*, coming out of his inauthentic life, chooses to live for the people of Argos and kills his mother and her

husband in order to save the people of the city from oppression. Even after Electra's opposition he traverses the road to freedom and commits to his deed without getting into any excuses.

However, it does not imply that Sartre's freedom allows one to commit violence. Rather than expressing support for violence, Sartre here tries to show that there may occur such situations where man may be compelled to make such a choice. But at the same time one has to pay the price for it. Orestes' character represents such commitment and responsibility to pay price for his deed. Whereas, Electra's role represents its opposite. Orestes creates, but Electra, being in bad faith bears life. A similar tendency of "bad faith" with the tendency to hide freedom and commitment is reflected through *Mathieu* the central character of the *Age of Reason* (1945), who tries to hide his relationship with his mistress *Marcelle* and in order to shake off his responsibilities for the unborn child he concentrates on getting her aborted. Through the dramas, Sartre tries to show that man has to choose at every moment and to get recognised as a man he has to get engaged to shape his image. Sartre's heroes in the dramas initially does not realise the actual implication of freedom and remains in an illusion without exercising it in real life situations. But as the situations develop they actively get involved in overcoming the given situations by understanding the responsibility of free choice (Wreszin, 1961). Thus, Sartre's philosophy of freedom does not urge man to become pessimistic or tyrannical but to get engaged and responsible.

M. Merleau Ponty criticises Sartre's freedom from another point of view which is again found to be misunderstood. Ponty explains the view of freedom as a kind of reciprocity with our environment in which structures of consciousness as well as meaning and acting are given to us. The world is constituted, but never completely constituted. We are free to a certain extent to modify the given meaning of the world through our autonomous choices, but not free without limit (Wright, n.d.). Criticising Sartre's concept of freedom Ponty holds that Sartre's notion of radical freedom essentially makes freedom meaningless by making it independent of any particular action. If all actions are counted as free (since consciousness is synonymous with freedom) then the concept of freedom becomes meaningless. It is always necessary to differentiate the free from the non-free acts. Ponty argues that any reference to free acts

must have reference to obstacles to freedom. But, Sartre seems to be equating freedom of action with freedom of thought.

In a similar tune, Morazain, in his dissertation “Absolute Freedom and its Limits” argues that “the ordinary use of the term ‘Man’ encompasses much more than what Sartre calls “for-itself”. It includes a physical appearance, a personality, a series of hidden biological organs. Hence, a sharp dichotomy becomes prominently necessary between that aspect of man that is free and the others which are not. According to him, freedom cannot possibly be at the origin of all the events encountered by human being. He states the example that if he slips off and fell from an icy sidewalk and gets a leg broken, then can it be said that he has freely broken his leg? (Morazain, 1973, p. 15)

In reply to these criticisms it is argued (Wright, n.d.) that the criticisms are limited to Sartre’s concept of original freedom. Sartre certainly maintains a difference between original and situational, which is overlooked by the critics. Referring to Sartre, Wright argues,

• According to Sartre while we are always free to posit our own ends, we also must make decision about the means that we will utilize in achieving those ends. These decisions are always made in a particular embodied context, in a given situation, and this situation contains within it certain objective relations of things that serve as obstacles to our freedom and to some extent constrain the means that are applicable to realizing our ends. Sartre calls this the coefficient of adversity of our situation. (Wright, n.d., p. 37)

Reinterpreting Sartre’s theory of freedom, defenders make it clear that Sartre’s freedom has two different phases. While one is interpreted as Factual Freedom (Jeanson, 1980/2000), Absolute Ontological Freedom (Santoni, 2008) and Original Freedom (Wright, n.d.) the other is interpreted as Freedom as valued (Jeanson), Practical or Existential Freedom (Santoni) and Freedom in Situation (Wright). It is repeatedly argued that the failure to distinguish the ontological from the practical or existential freedom leads to the misleading criticisms of Sartre’s account of freedom (Santoni, 2008). Most of the criticisms of Sartre’s freedom are based on misunderstandings of his concept.

Referring to Sartre's notion of freedom of facticity as intertwined notions Santoni says that freedom is never unconnected with situations or the facticity or with the "in-itself". He clarifies Sartre's point that freedom always gets meaning only in being engaged in a resisting world. Freedom always requires a given, that is the situation (Santoni, 2008, p. 788).

Sartre's existential phenomenology places freedom and determinism in a compatible floor. He always refers to freedom bounded by facticity. Drawing these concepts attuned with his ontological duos "being-for-itself" and "being-in-itself", Sartre holds that as like these two modes of being freedom and determinism are also internally related concepts and they require one another. "Being-in-itself" is that which is not free, the determined given, which is also considered to be the past understood in the sense of temporality according to Sartre. This is what can also be termed to be *facticity*. As Sartre holds that each human being is a being towards the future, hence, "for-itself" essentially requires a given being in order to transcend it towards the future. Consciousness is always intertwined with facticity for surpassing it since consciousness is always consciousness of not-being what is given. It is all about transcending and going beyond, negating the given. The event of slipping off the icy sidewalk can be said to be that given which we would have to transcend with proper choice and commitment.

Sartre argues that though in certain cases our actions may seem to be very appropriate to the situation it is certain that they are not necessitated by it. There always remain a number of specific details of an action that are left entirely open for us to decide. This is what called freedom in situation by Sartre.

Although our situations certainly puts limit to our possibilities and choices, it also contains a great deal of contingency and openness, and it is upto us to navigate through the contingency and make small choices about the specifics of how we will perform a particular action. (Wright, n.d., p. 30)

However, Sartre does not remain unattentive to the fact that at times human life may face such dangers that hardly leave any scope for further choice and commitment. The intensely brutal experiences of the anti-semitism in Sartre's lifetime can be stated as

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an example of such situations where Sartre himself hardly found any scope for individual choice. Here commenting on Sartre, Beauvoir notes that “Sartre thought that any situation could be transcended by subjective effort; in 1951, he knew that circumstances can sometimes steal our transcendence from us; in that case, no individual salvation is possible, only a collective struggle” (Morris 2008, 15). Thus, there are many helpless situations that we face in our day to day life where there hardly remains any scope for choice or for exercising freedom.

Sartre’s doctrine of freedom may not be able to do justice to all such situation in the expected way. Nevertheless, the significance of this doctrine lies in identifying man as freedom through which Sartre propounds a philosophy of engagement. Rather than sitting and contemplating over some issue, Sartre’s philosophy urges man to get engaged, to work and make a glorious image of man. Sartre presents his concept of freedom in such a comprehensive way that it can take care of the entire human life—ontological and ontic. Further, the emphasis is always there that freedom always carries with it the bounding features of commitment and responsibility. Freedom makes one profoundly committed and responsible for every choice made. Thus, it serves for the active life of man, shaping his identity as per undertaken projects and structuring his ethical life as well in a successful interactive platform.

Freedom and its implications in human life, thus, reveal Sartre’s main concern throughout his philosophical writings. The problem of the Other, the prime concern of this work also emerges from Sartre’s emphasis on individual freedom.

## Part II

### **2.4. Problem of the Other in the Phenomenological Tradition: Husserl and Heidegger**

As already mentioned, the problem of the Other as an issue of intersubjectivity is initiated by Husserl in his phenomenological explanations. He advances his argument for the intersubjective approach remaining very close to the analogical argument emphasising on bodily behaviour. Through the concept of empathy Husserl recognises others as similar embodied persons and holds that the first person centric *ego* exists in

all. He holds that the Other's body is like mine and thus likely possesses a similar sense of self-consciousness (Moyn, 2005, p. 61). Whenever I experience other persons I first experience their body like mine and also understand that their bodies express their internal mental states. However, Husserl claims that the Other can never be grasped in its "originary manner" (Moran, 2000, p. 177). Thus though Husserl presents a kind of analogical argument in regard to the problem of the Other, he is found contradicting the theory in maintaining the gap in grasping the Other in its originality.

While the argument from analogy claims that the mental state of the other person can be grasped immediately and fully by inference on observing his bodily behaviour, Husserl maintains that though other's body is expressive of their psychic selves, yet it is not possible to grasp the mental state in such clearness.(Moran, 2000, p. 177)

Accepting the partial unknowability of the Other Husserl affirms the otherness of the Other which is beyond the limit of one's understanding. According to him, one can in no way have the same experience of the Other's mental state as one will have of oneself, since the very difference between the self and the Other is constitutional in character. As Zahavi (2005) refers, "Had I had the same access to the consciousness of the Other as I have to my own, the Other would cease being an Other and instead become a part of myself"(as cited in Zahavi, 2005, p. 154). The first personal givenness of the mental state of the Other always remains inaccessible to me and hence it gets recognised as the experience of an Other. The Other is, thus, not given to me directly as other objects are, though the experience of the Other is a natural and inextricable part of my consciousness. In the experience of man there is always a gap or emptiness, they are given only through 'indication' (Moran, 2000, p. 176). The Other is said to be a "phenomenological modification of myself, since he is "grasped only 'within my ownness" (Moran, 2000, p. 177). Thus, in an epistemological explanation considering the body as the mediator Husserl presents a sort of subjective view regarding the position of the Other. In the *Cartesian Meditations* (1931) he places the Other as the other side of the Same and holds that the Other is mirrored in my own *ego*(Moyn, 2005). However, this can be said to be a limited understanding of Husserlian intersubjectivity since he is found proposing a broader intersubjective frame in his later work.

Taking a position in reversal to Husserl, Heidegger emphasises on the existence of the intersubjective world prior to the subject. Understanding the Husserlian *I* in a limited sense, he criticises Husserl of having soliptic biases and attempts to abolish it in *Being and Time* (1927) and presents the Other in a purely intersubjective mode maintaining that instead of being alone, the self is always with Others. Negating the necessity of any argument to understand the existence of the Other he appeals for its *apriori* understanding presenting the *Dasein* (human being) as being-in-the-world, where “the world is always, already the one that I share with the Others. The world of *Dasein* is *with-world* [Mitwelt]. Being-in is *being-with* [Mitsein] others”(Heidegger, 2010, pp. 115-116). The original relation between the Other and my consciousness is not the ‘you’ and ‘me’, it is the ‘we’. It is the mute existence in common of one member of the crew with his fellows....(Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 332).He considers “being-with-others” as an essential characteristic of one’s being. Thus, in Heidegger’s philosophy there is no mediating factor needed between I and the Other, rather we all are essentially united in a kind of herd or crowd. Coming out of the epistemological explanations of Husserl he presents the Other in an ontic level who is always found as a co-being. Hence the problem of the Other is a false problem for him.

Thus, where Husserl analyses the problem of the Other in terms of “being-for”, Heidegger introduces the notion of “being-with” and dismisses the problem of the Other as a problem. Where ‘for’ may intend some reciprocal relation of recognition or of conflict, “to-be-with” suggests a sort of ontological solidarity. Unlike Hegel, “Heidegger addresses the Other not as an object but as a human reality who establishes with me a relation of leaning interdependence rather than frontal opposition” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 331).

According to Heidegger, in my everyday ordinary living I realise my ‘being-with’ in the anonymous form of ‘they’, where my status of “for-myself” gets reflected in my ‘being-with’ in the inauthentic mode. I share the inauthentic possibilities in the form of instruments and complexes of instruments like the common things as readymade clothes, common means of transportation etc. made for anyone and continue a life of everybody. In this level I am not opposed to the Other as I am not ‘me’ (not authentic), instead we have the social unity of the ‘they’. Thus, what symbolises Heidegger’s

interpretation of inter-subjectivity is not the intuition of conflict, but rather a ‘crew’ (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992).

Though Heidegger refers to the Other in its ontic consideration as co-being in the world, he cannot do justice to the separateness or strangeness that the Other may have in nature. Heidegger’s primary concern always remains ontological, in the form of his attempt to explain the nature of being. The Other is considered as anyone in the crowd, mass and herd. In Heidegger’s words there is hardly anything remarkable in the Other. With the Other I may share a public, professional relation, nothing beyond that; he is my Other, my colleague, comrade or co-worker: but not the source of my compassion or admiration (Critchley, 2007).

At this point it is to be clarified that though Husserl is criticised of being too subjective in his phenomenological explanation, in Husserl the other person is never considered as an intentional object. Breaking the isolation of the self Husserl considers the self-other relation as a subject-subject relation. Husserl’s subjectivity is not like that of Descartes, devoid of the concrete world. Husserl’s *epoché* is not to bracket the world like Cartesian doubt. Here subjectivity cannot be understood without the objects or the Other (Zahavi, 2003, p. 53).

The Transcendental subjectivity of Husserl is not I but we subjectivity. The *I* can never be isolated in the inter monadic life world of Husserl. In isolated solidarity it is not possible to grasp one’s own personhood since it indispensably needs the others. Husserl insists on a shared natural world, where we live in a shared environment, sharing language and meaning (Moran, 2000, p. 175). The natural objects according to Husserl, are not constituted by one subjective perception but necessarily share the perception of everyone. When I see a bird flying in the sky I understand that others can also experience the same bird like me (Smith, 1995). By preserving the subjectivity Husserl tries to maintain the sense of responsibility for humanity as a whole. Hence each individual is treated as a conscious individual with an *ego* to be responsible. The attempt has never been to make others mere objects by maintaining one’s subjectivity. Through empathy Husserl tries to bind humanity as a whole, encompassing everyone in the world. However, though Heidegger considers human reality to be “being-with”, it is only in a practical field and not as necessary reality for humanity as a whole. Considering

intersubjectivity as a crowd he makes others non-significant without any asserting conscious individuality. This may carry positive sense only for a group of people but not for humanity as a whole. Following Heidegger's life events it may be said that *Dasein* represents only German *Dasein*, as he followed even the Nazi way of preserving the German identity. This may be the outcome of considering human reality as a faceless *herd*. Heidegger himself, in fact, realises the inauthenticity of such *they self* in his later period and following a mystical way he also talks about "mineness" (Moran, 2000, p. 239), considering the significance of the subjective self.

#### **2.4.1. J.P. Sartre's stand against Husserl and Heidegger**

Taking the basic concern of these theories and giving a newer interpretation of the issue as a whole Sartre puts forward his analysis of intersubjective relations. A thorough critical analysis of all these theories advanced to prove or defend the existence of the Other is found in the philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre. Criticising Husserl's impression of the Other, he views that though Husserl talks about conscious others having some difference from me, it cannot dig out the effective role of the Other in intersubjective platform. It can provide us only with a mirror image of one's own experience, but cannot recognise the Other as Other. He argues that the Other is a phenomenon too complex to reduce it to the problem of a mirror image. The Other is not only the one whom I see but the one who sees me (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 310).

Standing against the epistemological explanation of the problem Sartre views that Husserl cannot give a satisfactory explanation of the problem of the Other as he tries to solve the problem in an epistemological way by understanding the Other in relation to its knowledge (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 329). Our relation to the Other, as Sartre maintains, is not a relation of being to knowing, but it is fundamentally a relation of being to being, and this he finds in Heidegger's treatment of the Other, who presents the relations between human-reality as relation of being in his famous book *Being and Time* emphasizing that the characteristic of being of human reality is its "being- with- Others" (*mit-sein*) (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 330). But there too a problem arises, so far as the proposed *a priori*, ontological understanding of the Other is concerned.

According to Sartre, though Heidegger fulfils some of the requirements concerning the problem of the Other, he cannot provide us with a satisfactory solution in treating the Other as 'being-with'. If his proposed structure of 'being-with' for 'being-for' is accepted then it will simply be a foundation less affirmation. He holds *mit-sein* to be an abstract term which is incapable of defining the Other containing the power of becoming the Other. The Heideggerian proposal of "my being-with" understood from 'my' existential standpoint is limited only to 'my' being. Neither can it prove the Other's existence, nor can it bridge the gap between me and the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 333). Thus, according to Sartre, "The existence of an ontological and hence *a priori* "being-with" renders impossible all ontic connection with a concrete human-reality which would arise *for-itself* as an absolute transcendent" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 335). Heidegger's philosophy is said to have failed to surpass the faults of realism and idealism and hence, failed to suggest a satisfactory solution to the problem of the Other.

Sartre claims that the phenomenological arguments offered by Husserl and Heidegger for addressing the Other cannot satisfactorily present the uniqueness of the Other as Other. They remain more confined to the subjective explanation and metaphysical speculations. Hence, there remains a gap. How to account for the concrete self-other relation where one may probably affect the essential structure of the Other? The answer is sought in the analysis of the problem of the Other advanced by Sartre in his phenomenological explanations in the subsequent chapter.

**CHAPTER-III**  
**THE POSITION OF THE OTHER IN SARTRE’S PHENOMENOLOGICAL**  
**ONTOLOGY**

**3.1. Introduction**

The preceding chapter provides convincing proof for the multiplicity of selves standing against Cartesian isolated *cogito*. Moreover, the discussion also claims that the arguments advanced concerning the issue of intersubjectivity have left ample scope to focus on the self-other relation in different ways. In this vacuum, Sartre advances his phenomenological argument on the problem of the Other bringing in a somewhat newer interpretation of intersubjectivity through his treatment of negativity and freedom. Sartre’s discussion of the issue of the Other neither proceeds from the mind to the body nor from the body to the mind of the Other. Rather, his theory presents a convincing ground insisting on locating the ground of intersubjective cognition at the whole person (Sebastian , 2005).

**3.2. The Inevitable Other**

Sartre claims that there is no necessity of any argument to validate or invalidate the concept of the Other. Accordingly, taking a radical step, he insists on the “immediate apprehension of the Other” and holds that there is no necessity of demonstrating the certainty of the Other; rather the Other is the assurance of my existence. This experience is compared to the certainty of the *Cogito* as arrived-in by Descartes after a methodological reflection. The certainty of the Other’s existence can no way be doubted. It stems from the apprehension of my own being understood from the same reflective certainty of the self apprehended in the ‘look’ of the Other. Consciousness is primarily pre-reflective in nature, where the consciousness of the self remains in a non-positional mode. It reflects and apprehends the self only in the presence of the Other. The Other need not be defined as an *apriori* existence sharing *apriori* structure of myself as ‘being-with’ in Heideggerian sense. Rather, the emphasis should be on the fact that whenever the *self or cogito* is reflected on, it discloses to me the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular concrete Other (Rosato, 2010). Hence, according to Sartre, there is no necessity for finding out some reason for believing or not believing that the Other exists,

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rather it demands a belief in the Other himself as not being me. Sartre claims the earlier interpretation of the Other to be problematic as the Other remains probable in those explanations. He never wants to place the other as probable. Sartre argues that

...if he is for us, this can be neither as a constitutive factor of our knowledge of the world nor as a constitutive factor of our knowledge of the self, but as one who “interests” our being, and that not as he contributes a priori to constitute our being but as he interests it concretely and “ontically” in the empirical circumstances of our facticity(Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 339).

The Other is beyond the question of probability as it stands as another “for-itself” outside my experience, he is who is not me. Sartre says, “.....the structure of the other is on principle such that no new theory will come to validate or invalidate the hypothesis of his existence that no instrument will come to reveal new facts inspiring me to affirm or to reject this hypothesis” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 337). The Other is immediately present to me in the experience of being ‘looked-at’. He argues that any resistance to solipsism proves the certainty of the Other’s existence and “we have a total though implicit comprehension of his existence, that this pre-ontological comprehension comprises a surer and deeper understanding of the nature of the Other and the relation of his being to my being than all the theories which have been built around it”(Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 338).

With a detail analysis, Sartre comes to the certainty that the Other is a concrete evident presence beyond doubt which can no way be derived from ‘myself’, nor can it be made an object of a phenomenological reduction. The Other is not an object that can be ‘known’ through intentional consciousness, but a subject having the capacity of transforming ‘my’ world to make ‘me’ apprehend his existence. What Sartre indicates through the concept of the Other can be understood from the following points quoted from *Being and Nothingness*.

- “He towards whom I do not turn my attention”
- “He who looks at me and at whom I am not yet looking”
- “One who delivers me to myself *unrevealed* but without revealing himself”.

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- “He is the concrete pole of the alienation of my possible”
- “But he cannot be distinct from this same alienation and flow; he is the meaning and the direction of them...”
- “He is the supporting environment of my being-*unrevealed*”
- “The Other’s objectifying ‘look’ is the destruction of all objectivity for me”<sup>4</sup> (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 360).
- He not only transforms myself but causes a total metamorphosis of the world which I inhabit. He places me at distance from my worldly objects. But this presence is so immediate that I experience the distance less presence of the Other to me. When he looks at me he is separated from me by no distance, by no object of the world, by nobody in the world, but by the sole fact of his nature as Other. Thus, the appearance of the Other’s ‘look’ is not an appearance in the world-neither in “mine” nor in the “Other’s”. “The Other is present to me without any intermediary as a transcendence which is not mine. But this presence is not reciprocal” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 361). It is not that the Other does not ‘look’ at me from “the midst of” my world. Rather, he comes towards me and my world from his transcendence. The Other makes it impossible to become an object for except for an other freedom. The other can only limit me. (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, pp. 360-361)

Sartre criticises Husserl for considering the intersubjective reality to be epistemological; for describing the relation with the Other to be a relation between the knower and the known. He argues that the approach towards the Other remains problematic when it proceeds from the I subject. Such approach can never ensure reciprocity between the self and the Other. The Other defined in this sense can only be an object, a static, unconscious, non-free object (Sebastian , 2005). Sartre defines the Other as a subject, a “being-for-itself”, as I am, having an alternative individuality with the capacity of organising and shaping own individual situation (Fox; 2003: 55). He insists that this capacity of the Other, of giving a new orientation to my situation and my identity implies that the Other is free and his freedom is revealed to me in my being-for-him(Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 351). Contrary to Heidegger, Sartre holds that the Other

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<sup>4</sup> All the quoted points above come under the same reference.

is not a logical or ontological necessity, but a factual and contingent necessity that pervades our everyday existence.

It is to be noted that Sartre's phenomenology is not pure phenomenology as like Husserl. Though Sartre takes the ground of Husserlian phenomenology, he presents it as a fusion with existentialism. His existential concepts of negation, absurd and thrownness along with imagination and freedom gives a different shape to his work, which may seem to be sometimes quite comprehensive and sometimes confusing. Further, his literary imagination gives additional flavour to his philosophical expressions. Sartre's literary explanation and the existential themes influence his discourse of intersubjectivity as well.

### **3.3. The Other Comprehended in Visibility (being "looked-at")**

Vision, considered as a source of higher knowledge and reasoning, has occupied a significant role in philosophy from the period of Greek philosophy itself. However, Sartre introduces another possible phase of vision emphasising on visibility. Sartre is considered to be the most visually oriented philosopher of his century (Brosman, 1987). It is claimed to be impossible to think of the shift in the notion of vision from traditional to modern leading to the post-modern debate without considering Sartre's concept of the 'gaze'. In *Being and Nothingness* rather than representation, Sartre presents vision as a 'force' expressed through 'look' or 'gaze' exercised in intersubjective human situations. Sartre introduces the Other through the characteristic of the 'look'. The Other, according to Sartre, is always apprehended as a 'look' and one's status before the Other, remains as being "looked-at". Sartre writes, "...the realisation of the powerful upsurge of the Other through his 'look' makes it clear that Other is no way given as an object among other objects. The Other's identity is the "look-looking" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 359). While the earlier philosophers discussing the problem of the Other maintain a sort of indifference regarding the nature of the Other, Sartre prefers to highlight on its negative characteristic. According to Sartre, the Other is that which interrupts one's lived experiences and affects the very structure of the self. One comes to be aware of the existence of the Other through the experience of being "looked-at" and this is what defined as the essential structure of one's "being-for-others", the third essential mode of being (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 345).

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Referring to Sartre, Kenaan (2000), and Brosman (1987) emphasises on the constitutive role of the 'look' or 'gaze', which can give a different orientation to the lived situation and play a constitutive role in the construction of meaning and identity (e.g. in the social and political spheres). Vision, thus, no more remains in the traditional understanding as a receptive medium but thematised as one of the formative components of that situation (Kenaan, 2000, p. 195). More than a representation, vision considered through the 'look', is based on the notion of force. This shifting notion of vision, presented by Sartre, is said to be an influence of Hegel and a counter to the Cartesian interpretation of the visual. Descartes allows no scope for judgment or interpretation in visual experience and affirms only the direct visual appearance.

With this emphasis on immediate visual experience, Descartes also shows resistance to the experience of other person as person, since it cannot be grasped in direct experience. According to Descartes, our experience of another person (as a person) necessarily takes the form of an interpretational construction (Kenaan, 2000, p. 200). The other person is excluded from the direct visual field and made an object of second order speculation, inference or interpretation. A contradictory view to this argument and a reply to some of the confusions of Descartes are found in the interpretation of the 'visual' in Sartre's philosophy. Sartre emphasises on the failure of the epistemological approach towards intersubjectivity from Descartes to Husserl and advances his argument in an ontological ground where the Other need not be targeted to know but experienced as a self-evident existence in direct encounter. The evident presence of the Other encountered in the gaze is crucial for Sartre in the context of a discussion of "being-for-others".

... for Sartre, the philosophical need to prove or demonstrate the existence of the other person is indicative of (1) a blindness regarding the fundamental and indubitable presence of other human subjects and (2) a misunderstanding of how this presence manifests itself, i.e. , of how to find the evidence of this presence.(Kenaan, 2000, p. 201)

Like Descartes, Sartre also claims that the perception of the other person cannot disclose to us the Other as a subject and hence he does not consider vision as a sufficient ground for intersubjectivity. Emphasising on the fact of being "looked-at" before the

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Other, Sartre holds that it is not through vision, but through our 'visibility' that we encounter the other person in his subjectivity as a 'look'. It expresses that no perception of the Other can be limited to mere optics since the Other is not a given object but a freedom having the capacity to magnetise around him the field of perception. However, the term 'look' is not used by Sartre in its literal sense. He uses the term 'look' as a metaphor in order to express the threat of something. Without relating it to a concrete person or any direct 'look' of the eyes, Sartre considers anything threatening as a 'look'. According to him though every 'look' refers to something sensible in the perceptible field, it does not refer to any determined form. It is not that two real eyes have to be there to arouse in me the feeling of being "looked-at". He claims the possibility of 'look' anywhere. The rustling of branches, the sound of the footstep followed by silence, a slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of the curtain- all represent possible instances of the 'look' as defined by Sartre. It is not that behind the curtain or branches there is someone really gazing at. Rather, they themselves represent eyes. At hearing the footsteps behind, before the apprehension that there is someone there, what one realises is that he is vulnerable. Hence, any reference to the 'look' defined by Sartre does not necessarily refer to other people; rather, it implies one's vulnerability before the Other. Anything that makes one vulnerable in his original position may be defined as a 'look' in Sartre's interpretation (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, pp. 346-47). The threat of the 'look' is such that without even seeing anyone concrete one experiences the 'look' arresting all possibilities. This structure implies a type of slavery, a permanent danger that makes one feel Other's freedom. The Other's look may appear from anywhere, from behind (the feeling that schoolmate behind, can look at the neck and snicker over it), from above, as done in *Erostratus* (1948) (Brosman, 1987). Sartre, thus, defines 'look' to be objectifying or alienating in nature which makes one conscious of himself as escaping himself. It negates the capacity to freely interpret oneself and his freedom is enslaved by the freedom of the Other.

The point is to emphasise on the fact that one's perspective in the world is not the sole and final perspective, there are even some other perspectives too and he just remains as an entity seen from such perspective (Webber, 2011, p. 189). This metaphoric 'look', in Sartre's opinion is equated with some strong other-perspectives, other than the ones one has. That way also 'look' need not be always physical or eye-related. It is rather any

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kind of uncanny feeling of there being strong presence of Other in any form. It may be some other perspectives, other than one's, an article written somewhere that has strong affect on the self, or a physical gesture of the Other, or even a natural calamity, a strong flood that suddenly overpowers one with its strong dark designs.

However, though in the first stage Sartre considers anything threatening as a 'look' without relating it to a concrete person, with stages of interpretation presenting 'look' as 'gaze' he refers to the confrontation of another subject- a free human being transforming the living situation of the self. The phenomenon of gaze is the most significant tool for Sartre in pulling out philosophy from behind the Cartesian window to the inter-human square outside. Referring to Sartre, Kenaan maintains that in Sartre's interpretation 'vision' no more remains a private content of mind but gets applied in the concrete field to understand human relations in the intersubjective world. With the reinterpretation of Cartesian form of vision, visibility is presented as "the field of forces and effects within which the subjects (self and the Other) are located" (Kenaan, 2000, p. 202).

It may be mentioned here that though 'gaze' is said to have broader applications, Sartre is mostly found using 'look' and 'gaze' interchangeably. Without relating it to any other subject carrying it, 'gaze' is also articulated in terms of the indeterminate causes of vulnerability like the sound of footstep, the rustling of leaves or something like an unseen stranger that threatens one. This indeterminateness of the 'gaze' or 'look', advanced by Sartre, influences Lacan to a great extent. Lacan carries on this concept of hidden 'gaze' to an extended sense and presents his concept emphasising that the feeling of being caught in a 'gaze' or the feeling of vulnerability may be caused by our own act of looking without relating to any other factor outside. "Lacan even goes as far to say that the "gaze is everything in the field of vision except the actual look of the person looking".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>THE GAZE. [online] Available at: <http://thomaslcummins.tripod.com/id124.html>, accessed on 19/3/2014

### 3.4. Negative Intersubjectivity

Sartre's fusion of existential concepts of emotion and negation with the phenomenological concept of intuition leads to his peculiar explanation of the intersubjective relation. The most significant thing that Sartre brings into the discussion of intersubjectivity is the importance of negativity in understanding the Other. Nurturing a sort of negativity from his childhood experiences and later getting influenced by Hegel's master-slave dichotomy Sartre concentrates on showing the negative aspect of the self-other relation, a subject-subject ontological relation which no one from the trend attempted to establish.

Introduced in *The Psychology of Imagination* or *The Imaginary* (1940), the concept of negativity is implied through the intersubjective relation in *Being and Nothingness* and some early plays of Sartre. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre claims the ontological relation between the self and the Other to be of "internal negation". If I want to get recognised as a subject I have to refuse the subjectivity of the Other. It is "a synthetic active connection of the two terms, each of which constitutes itself by denying that it is the Other" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 339). The Other must appear as not being me, as a refused self. In this ontological relation of mutual exclusion, one's being survives at the expense of the being of the Other and vice-versa. Each keeps on negating the Other like two physical forces (Sebastian, 2005). Following the Hegelian tone that it is only in so far as each man is opposed to the Other that he is absolutely for himself, Sartre holds that, "No external nothingness separates my consciousness from the Other's consciousness; it is by the very fact of being me that I exclude the Other. The Other is the one who excludes me by being himself, the one whom I exclude by being myself" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 319).

Sartre explains our existence in the face of the Other through the phrase "being-for-others" (*pour-autrui*) and considers it to be another distinct mode of existence in human reality as fundamental as "being-for-itself" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 289). It is a mode of consciousness which even being pre-reflective self-consciousness refers to a kind of ontological structure that is my being without "being-for-me"; a structure which I cannot grasp even when it belongs to me. It activates when the Other appears on the scene transcending my free possibilities. It is a mode of existence when the Other is

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apprehended directly as a subject in relation to me and I realise being an object in his determined universe existing in pure reference to the Other. It refers to a person's presence in the world as an object among other objects while the Other is revealed as a subject (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 489).

Unlike in Hegel, "being-for-others" is not an ontological problem for Sartre, it is not to be reflected upon, shedding more light of consciousness and then to be known in a better way, Being is not a piece of knowledge. In Hegel one becomes an object for another and vice-versa. But Sartrean subject that 'looks at the Other as object, cannot restore its pre-looked character of subject for itself by providing more inputs and information about its nature and its activities. It is not a matter of more knowledge or of less knowledge that makes one an object or a subject. The very 'being' of consciousness cannot be revealed by others even by shedding more knowledge.

Before the interaction with the Other the self enjoys the subjective status as "being-for-itself". But as soon as the Other appears, the whole picture takes a reverse turn. The subjective self becomes an object for itself as consciousness gets directed towards itself to pass judgement from the perspective of the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 302). Criticising the earlier interpretations which consider the Other as an object that can be known through intentionality, Sartre with certain illustrations establishes that the Other cannot be an object of knowledge as he causes immediate transformation in me making me realise his subjectivity. This pre-reflective being rather measures truth and knowledge than being measured by knowledge. The Other is revealed not in knowledge and with proof and verifiability but in the experienced relation where there is an encounter of the one and the Other in their facticity. 'Look' thus explains concrete relation as the 'look', as if, 'fixes us', unable to move. Unlike in Descartes, it is from the certainty of the Other that I derive my own certainty. While both pre-reflective and reflective consciousness fail to capture or intuit this independently existing conscious identity of oneself, 'look' can. Thus, reflecting and reflected consciousness are not two consciousness in Sartre. It is an internal division of consciousness in which one can shed some light on the other side of the same coin and the reflecting one knows something about the reflected one also. But the one who is "looked-at" does not know what it is for the 'one who looks', it remains beyond the grip of reflective gaze.

Even then, Sartrean position does not differ drastically from the one that we find in Descartes or in Husserl with their emphasis on free subjectivity although what is meant by free subjectivity differs in each individual position. The way Sartre sets up the encounter with the Other suggests that one is and foremost an absolutely free “being-for-itself” and then only becomes an inauthentic one with a fall from its initial “for-itself” position to something like “for-others” , through a shame-inducing encounter. In Sartre the centrality of my freedom remains intact till it is altered by the strong presence of the Other.

In the first stage of the possible encounter with the Other Sartre presents the example of a scene in a public park. Suppose, while sitting in a public park one identifies a figure that passes by the benches at a certain distance. At its sight from a distance, it is apprehended as an object among other objects. Conceiving it as an object does not bother one at all since an object cannot bring in a new interpretation to one’s surrounding. But as soon as it is apprehended as a man it appears as the alienating Other. If the Other exists in the same way as other objects exist, the difference is still there from intersubjective standpoint. Being a man he is capable of giving a new sense to the surrounding of the lawn from his standpoint which essentially flees from the individual originally sitting there. At the presence of the other man it no more remains possible to give one’s sole interpretation to the surrounding universe. It automatically gets interpreted from the Other’s angle too. Unlike other objects the man before him will “look-at” him and thereby, objectify him. This way, the appearance of the Other causes a fixed sliding of one’s universe towards the Other.

It implies that when one sees the figure as an object it is vision which is working. But when the figure appears as a man then vision acts as visibility as an alienating force. This can also be compared to the window view experience of Hilbert in *Erostratus*. Hilbert, looking down through the window from the seventh floor feels the satisfaction of being the ultimate spectator, able to give others down in the street, a static objective status. His downward perspective seems to offer him a solution against the gaze of the Other. But gradually he realises that seeing without being seen is a mere illusion in Sartrean intersubjective world. In the concrete intersubjective field every subjective position is vulnerable any time.

Though, for some moments it is possible to see the other man as an object still standing at a particular distance, the reorientation, the sliding of one's universe ascertains the permanent possibility of *being seen* by the Other turning him as an object. The discovery of oneself as an object ascertains the identity of the Other as a subject. Hence, Sartre holds that one's apprehension of the Other in the world as probably being a man refers to his permanent possibility of *being-seen-by-him*. In this way, the object seen may be substituted for the subject who sees. Hence, Kenaan (2000) notes, "The Sartrean visual field determines an either-or situation, in which gazes can neither meet nor reciprocate" (p. 202). The position of the subject and the object keeps on changing in the exercise of the 'look'.

Similar 'strong other' perspective of the 'look' is encountered in the park when the Other in the park steals one's world toward him. The world that was enjoyed by the self in his solitary presence in the park now flows toward the strong other perspective of the one who looks at him. In such experience, the Other's body appears as the centre of his own field of perception and of action and the space he occupies is hodological, the tree in the park is in front of him, not of the bench. The 'look' of the man in the park, thus, disintegrates one's world to an extent that the Other, or the 'look', disrobes him from his world. Through such concrete examples Sartre argues that the Other is on principle the *one who looks at me* (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 346).

However, in this regard, Merleau Ponty differs from Sartre by drawing attention to the other unexplored horizon of objects and of the world that escapes one person's single grip and that way two persons can 'look' at the same thing (say, sun set) but with different focus and different perspectives. This will not be stealing one's world by another intruder; rather, it may still keep room for two different worlds to be viewed by more than one subject. To quote Jennifer Ang Mei Sze: "...for Merleau Ponty, 'our perspective, views [are] [not] independent of each other, so they slip into each other and brought together finally in the thing", a "communication between one consciousness and another in one and the same world" (Sze, 2010, p. 50). Since perspectives often merge into each other, we do-co-exist in a common world and we can communicate and co-operate. However, even for Sartre the 'look' that objectify the Other is a deviation, a fall from the ideal way one should be with the Other, "Hell is other people", only when our

relations are twisted or corrupt. In his matured writings, Sartre comes out from this negative intersubjectivity and talks about class concept. This is discussed in the following chapters in more detail. Here it is concentrated to focus on the way Sartre introduces the Other in his pre-War writings.

### **3.4.1. Shame: the experience caused by the Other**

For Sartre knowing is a kind of being. Hence, intersubjective relation is also primordially a relation of being, which remains transformative in nature. The Other can affect and transform the structure of the self. In order to emphasise on the immediate apprehension of the Other where the Other is apprehended from his intervention in my affairs, and to show the transformation of my subjective status to the level of an object and thus to establish the otherness of the Other Sartre takes the example of 'shame'. More appropriately shame can be considered as the main pillar of Sartre's arguments on the problem of the Other. Morris (2008) presents Sartre's concept of shame in the following way:

Here we are dealing with a mode of consciousness which has a structure identical with all those which we have previously described. It is a non-positional self-consciousness, conscious (of) itself as shame....In addition its structure is intentional; it is a shameful apprehension of something and this something is *me*. I am ashamed of what I *am*. Yet...it is in its primary structure shame before somebody....I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other. (Morris, 2008, p. 124)

According to Sartre, shame is not a mere emotion among others. Rather, for him shame is the fundamental mood of intersubjectivity, both ontological and phenomenological. Besides the division between ontological and phenomenological shame, another kind of division, i.e. the division between 'ontic' and 'ontological' dimension of shame, may also need mention here. The 'ontic' one is the usual, ordinary sense of using this term when one feels ashamed of the kind of person one is seen as being, an ordinary reactions being categorised in negative terms. It is a feeling of being ashamed of this or that shameful act, which is not ontological or fundamental. The shame that Sartre emphasises on, is ontological in the sense that it is inbuilt in our existential

structure. Again, it is phenomenological since it analyses the structure of experience, reflecting a form of intentional consciousness as it is a shameful apprehension of an object i.e. myself (Webber, 2011). However, Zahavi insists that Sartre's account of shame is not a reflective consciousness as Michael Lewis considers it to be. Shame is felt prior to reflecting upon it. It is an immediate, pre-reflective emotion felt at the approach of the Other, as the Other constitutes me as an object of which I am ashamed (Zahavi, 2011).

Sartre analyses shame through the illustrative key-hole example. While peeping inside the key-hole with a motive to position myself as a pure spectator I am merged in the activity of seeing without being seen. But this pre-reflective consciousness gets interrupted when I suddenly hear footsteps behind me and I realise myself exposed to the gaze of another, I find myself *seen*. I get ashamed of myself before the Other. It disturbs the rhythm of my living as an embodied consciousness and introduces the irrevocable experience of being exposed as a body before the Other, the fundamental experience of the immediate presence of the Other. Hence, it denies the necessity of any argument proving the existence of the Other. Further, shame introduces a new dimension to my existence, as it challenges my subjective position at the centre of my universe and throws me out of myself. It drags me towards a dimension which is very new to me, which suddenly escapes my own grasp. The specific characteristics or properties which gets developed in such transformation does not exist in the "for-itself" beforehand. Neither are they assigned by the Other to the for-itself, they rather subsists in the gulf that separates the 'in-itself' and the 'for-itself'. As Sartre argues, this new being which appears for the Other neither reside in me potentially nor in the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992). Explaining this experience Guenther (2011) says, "The gaze of the Other does not offer me anything in particular to *know*; rather, it alters my *being*, triangulating the structure of my existence into a relation between me, myself and the Other" (p. 26).

### **3.4.1.1. Shame as a Triangular Experience**

Though consciousness in Sartre's phenomenology essentially involves two terms, the subject and the object, in shame, we find there three terms involved in the process. First, I as the subject of the shameful apprehension, the second *me, the object* of which I am ashamed, and the third is *the Other*, another subject before whom I am this shameful

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me object (Morris, Sartre, 2008, p. 124). Sartre considers it as such an experience pertaining to which we can no more cast doubt on the involvement of another consciousness other than our own. The Other is the indispensable mediator between myself and me since I become ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 302). Shame is shame of oneself before the Other. With the illustration of shame Sartre proves that any reference to the self certainly implies reference to the Other. Hence, it is not only that shame is a unitary apprehension with three dimensions: “I am ashamed of myself before the Other” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 289), but ‘shame’ is a disclosure of the certainty of the *cogito* of the Other. Shame consciousness, thus, bears indubitable witness to the *cogito* both of themselves ashamed of and the concrete evident presence of the Other. Sartre presents shame as such a strong emotion at the existence of the Other that in shame the Other appears within me causing a split within myself. In shame I am distanced from myself as I judge myself to be shameful and hence the Other appears within me. Thus, through the example of shame Sartre establishes the distanceless presence of the Other. Emphasising on this distanceless presence Sartre distances himself from the ethics of intersubjectivity put forward by phenomenologists like Levinas which is primarily based on respecting the distance between the self and the Other. However, it does not establish Sartre as an anti-moralist in the intersubjective discourse since Sartre has some other significant ways to advance his ethics of intersubjectivity, which is discussed in the later chapters in this thesis.

#### **3.4.1.2. Shame and Alienation**

The issue of alienation is taken up by Sartre both in individual and social level realised in the ontological sphere. According to Sartre, the seed of alienation is hidden in the experience of shame itself. In shame I experience a different self, the self of which I am ashamed does not exist prior to my encounter with the Other. It is gaze of the Other that confers this new self on me. The gaze of the Other transforms my free, self-transcending subjective status to the status of an object. In this degraded identity I get a new alienated status not chosen by me. The transcendence of another free subject transcends my transcendence; for which I acquire a transformed status, a new ‘nature’, a being *that is what it is*. This transformed identity confined to the gaze of the Other is what defined as the “being-for-others” by Sartre. In shame, according to Sartre, the

subject experiences an original fall (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 352). The Other introduces a new world and a new being to me which was not potentially present in me. In shame, I am given a new lesson by the Other that I have an outside that is vulnerable and exposed, a body that exceeds my own conscious experience.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre states that man is a pure effort to become God, to become a complete consciousness being which one could create the ultimate image of himself and exercise control over Other's image of him. But this is said to be an useless passion since the idea of God is self-contradictory<sup>6</sup>. Hence it is never possible to control the image that the Other has of me. Sartre aptly expresses such situation through some of the central characters of his plays. In *The Flies* Orestes realises the paradox of freedom when he finds his crime in Electra's eyes which he could neither know nor control. This signifies that the Other is the original fall. A similar frame is presented in *No Exit* where the three characters see themselves through the Other's image of them which they find to be beyond control. In such situation no freedom remains and man feels like a fallen subject without any free possibility. Substantiating this fact, Sartre, in *No Exit*, expresses it through the character of Garcin, who realises that the Other can turn one's life into Hell and hence, he finally says, "Hell is other people". Such pre-dominance of the Other is explained through the emotion of shame in *Being and Nothingness*. Guenther (2011) states, "In shame I am expelled from the paradise of a purely subjective freedom" (p. 26).

### 3.4.1.3. Shame and Bodily Alienation

Though Sartre finds it difficult to abide by the Husserlian analogy of knowing the Other through bodily behaviour and though he is not as famous as Merleau Ponty regarding the issue of corporeality, yet he gives 'body' a significant consideration in defining "being-for-itself" and "being-for-others". Denoting "being-for-itself" as an embodied consciousness Sartre holds that "being-for-itself" "must be wholly body and it must be wholly consciousness", a body that is "wholly psychic" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 404). Hence, whenever "being-for-itself" gets a transformed status i.e. the "being-for-

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<sup>6</sup>Sartrean use of the term God as "being-in-itself-for-itself" shows that it refers to a being that is conscious and self aware but at the same time, of a fixed nature and beyond change. This is self-contradictory and hence not possible.

others”, the bodily factor takes the central position as man turns to be wholly body without any psychic element in it.

I become conscious of my body as mine only when I experience the world through my senses. Our sense organs are said to be the representation of our being-in-the-world so far as we live in the form of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 429). Since senses are nothing but the bodily extension, hence “...to say that I have entered into the world, come to the world, or that there is a world, or that I have a body is one and the same thing” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. xviii). Since we cannot prove the existence of the Other, the only way the Other appears to me is through certain experiences like shame, fear and pride through which the Other makes me apprehend him. Here, according to Sartre, the connecting link is the body.

Concerning body, Sartre does not prefer to focus much on the psychological or artistic explanations as he feels that such explanations undermines the discussion on the relation between consciousness and body. The focussed thing is that the Other’s body is always given in situation, a thing among things. In this reference, he maintains a difference between the lived body (*Leib*) or the “body-for-itself” and the body as caught in Other’s ‘look’ as the “body-for-others”. The lived body is also referred to as the body-subject, the unperceived and unutilisable centre of reference in a situation. Referring to Heidegger’s definition of human reality as *Dasein*, “being-there”, Sartre holds that the body is the thereness or the core aspect of the facticity of the “for-itself”. Without a body the “for-itself” would not have been considered as belonging to the world. Even being the centre of all perception and action, the “body-for-itself” is always invisible because our consciousness of objects in the perceptual field is non-positional consciousness of the centre of the field (Morris, Sartre, 2008). However, Sartre does not consider the body as an instrument understood from the mind-body dualistic sense. Rather, in his opinion, as a lived body I am this instrument by which the world is revealed as hierarchy of instrumental complexes. The boundaries of the lived body according to Sartre mostly appear to be open as it does not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of the physical body. The used tools can also sometimes become part of the “body-for-itself” or the lived body. While writing, suppose, it is not so possible to differentiate or perceive

separately the pen and the hand handling the pen, as the written words capture the concentration of perception (Morris, Sartre, 2008).

In the primary explanation the body represents man's facticity situating it in the world, and assigning certain physical limits to the "for-itself" which represents the individual's "being-in-the-world". Unlike Descartes, Sartre does not go for the distinction between mind and body as two different substances. Rather he defines, the 'for-itself' as embodied consciousness. Hence the body is not unconscious "in-itself" till it becomes a corpse. "As 'existed' by the 'for-itself', it is a psychic object. More accurately, it can be said that the 'for-itself' is its body" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. xiviii). Sartre refers to different dimensions of the body; viz. "The body-for-me", "the body-for-the-other" and "the body-seen-by-the-other".

Sartre presents his concept of vision particularly in connection to the body. One asserted problem of vision is emphasised to be that the observer cannot observe himself, or the lived-body. Sartre's characters in *Nausea* (1938) and *Age of Reason* (1945) tries to do so in different ways and fails. Unlike Ponty Sartre considers it to be a point of view on which no point of view is possible (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 461). It is never possible to know one's body from outside as someone else does. This is identified as the problem of self apprehension expressed through the examples like Roquentin, in *Nausea* trying to apprehend his face in the mirror, his hand on the table in which he fails to apprehend them as others do apprehend (Brosman, 1987). This suggests that unlike own body, the body of the Other can be immediately apprehended. But that also becomes a problem as the Other takes a point of view on my body making me an instrument. "Being-for-others" become a significant point here in connection with the bodily existence.

"Being-for-others" is explained particularly in terms of one's bodily existence; the embodied me, caught in the 'look' of the Other. The 'look', according to him is directed by the other fellow in our presence, and our presence is in the first place the presence of our body in situation. Sartre considers it as central or at least as the point of departure for his ontological analysis. Sartre's understanding of body in relation to shame is somewhat different from Hegel. Considering body as a whole mode of being

Sartre argues shame to be attached to the body unlike Hegel who considers shame to be a stand taken against the body.

Shame, which is more particularly the bodily shame, makes me feel like a different self all together. In revealing me as an entity in the world, shame arouses in me the consciousness of being bodily; that I am my body. It is not that before experiencing the Other through the experience of shame I am not aware of my body. I am, but within myself I experience my relation with my body only from inside. Contrarily, what shame adds on it is that “I have an outside”, which is identified by the Other. I am purely bodily before the Other (Webber, 2011). At the existence of the other I realise myself to be bodily and feel that my body turns to be an ‘in-itself’, an instrument to be utilized by the Other. It is not my body as I exist, but my body that exists for the Other. In this bodily encounter, I become alienated from my own command over my body and experience it to be shameful of. I sweat, blush or feel shy of as I appear as a body seen by the Other. I prefer to become invisible in such a situation, but it fails as I cannot apprehend it. We consider the “body-for-the-Other” and the “body-for-us” to be of same reality because the “body-for-the-Other” is nothing but the “body-for-us”, inapprehensible and alienated (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, pp. 462-463). Shame makes it understood to me that being bodily, I am liable to some external perspective. In Sartre’s consideration of gaze the bodily factor overpowers. It is not that the Other only apprehends what my body is doing, rather I am apprehended as what I am doing being embodied. Referring to Sacks, Webber (2011) notes that, “when I am caught spying through the keyhole, what they have caught at it is not my body, but me, my self...Thus my body’s posture is my posture, what the Other sees in me”(as cited in Webber 2011, 190). The experience of shame itself distinctively gives rise to two concepts of the body, the “body-for-itself” and the “body-for-others”.

In a similar way, Simone De Beauvoir presents her political interpretation of shame referring to the female body caught in the gaze of the Other. Referring to Beauvoir, Guenther (2011) notes, “the girl ‘literally...no longer sees her own body.’ She sees only her reflection in the gaze of others: a reflection she can neither escape nor identify with...” (Guenther, p. 35).

Further, Levinas's account of shame can be referred to as an alternative interpretation from Sartre. Levinas, in *Totality and Infinity* (1969), describes the arrival of the Other as an interruption of the way in which I ordinarily experience the world, an interruption that challenges and re-orders my experience. However, contrary to Sartre Levinas holds that instead of blocking my future possibilities, the Other rather opens up an ethical dimension in my behaviour. Where Sartre keeps on arguing for the preservation of the subjective selfhood, Levinas repents for being confined within the periphery of one's own subjectivity and this is what he recognises as shame. There is no degrading provocation involved in the experience of shame according to Levinas. Shame according to him is the fact of being riveted to one self, the radical impossibility of feeling oneself to hide *from oneself*. "If the structure of shame is triangular here, it is a triangle in which the Other does not (yet) figure, a suffocating relation between me myself and being" (Guenther, 2011, p. 30). Our intimacy to ourselves is shameful according to Levinas. While Sartre considers shame as the end of my transcendence and choice, Levinas holds that shame rather arouses in me a feeling of inescapable exposure to many alternatives posed by the face of the Other abiding by which I advance myself for the collective project taking responsibility of the Other. "being-for-others", for Levinas becomes the site from which the project of hospitality and responsibility gets meaning.

#### **3.4.1.4. Critical Analysis of Shame**

Sartre's interpretation of the experience of shame reflecting the negative intersubjective relation is criticised on some obvious grounds. Common criticism comes for his being confined only to the negative interpretation of shame (Taylor, Dastur 2011, Guenther 2011). Critics have clearly pointed out specifically two distinct forms of shame, disgrace shame and anticipatory shame, which are termed as *honte* and *pudeur* in French and as *schande* and *scham* in German. It is clearly noted that Sartre has provided explanations only for the negative form of the emotion of shame which is referred to as disgraceful in nature, whereas there remains an equally significant form of shame which positively allows us to respect the privacy of others (Izard 1977). Carroll Izard conceives shame as an emotion that makes us responsive towards the feelings of others and thus makes us socially responsible. Max Scheler, though agrees that shame at times reveals to

be quite a painful experience resulting in self-hatred, does not undermine the positive side of shame often seen in the “shame of the blushing virgin characterising lovely warmth”(as cited in Zahavi, 2011, p. 217). In such case rather than arousing self-hatred shame may lead to self-respect or self-esteem. Similarly, even though appreciating Sartre for the descriptive value of his analysis, the way he explains the experience of shame in establishing the direct interaction with the Other, Dastur (2011) expresses doubt about the universal possibility of workability of the experience of shame as the essential experience of the Other as such.

Further, referring to the issues of visibility and invisibility Morris (2011) notes that ‘look’ may not necessarily be always degrading and the feeling of being objectified may occur even in not being “looked-at”. According to him there is significant implication of the different modes of visibility and invisibility for different types of ‘look’. “There is not just the hostile or ridiculing stare, but the ‘look’ which recognizes a fellow human being (some might prefer to say that not every ‘look’ is a ‘look’.)” (Morris, 2011, p. 142).

Strengthening this point she further states that it is not always necessary to be ‘looked’ to feel being objectified. With certain illustrations she shows that even “not-looking” is often as significant as ‘looking’. Getting ignored by someone may equally be objectifying even without being ‘looked’ in Sartrean sense. Referring to Phyllis Morris (1990) she states the example of some female teachers who feel objectified as they are ignored by male colleagues who do not want to listen to their opinions. This is also said to be a kind of objectification without ‘look’ (Morris, 2011).

Further, Guenther (2011) criticises Sartre for offering shame as the starting point for a phenomenology of social life. The fact of ones being always with the Other is guaranteed by the very fact of our birth, as one is dependent on others even for being born in this world. Hence he denies the possibility existing as a “being-for-itself” at any time without being touched by the complicated burden of the “being-for-others”. However, in this regard it has to be also mentioned that Sartre also considers the simultaneous existence of the two modes in a single individual, but he denies the mutual derivability of one from the other. He says, “I am ‘simultaneously for-itself and for-

others' but neither of these aspects can be derived from the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 376).

Gabriele Taylor, another remarkable critic of Sartre, criticises Sartre's account of shame for being too simplistic and limited in its coverage. Moreover she also claims Sartre to be wrong for considering the observer always as critical about the agent, since she regards the shame including positive praise as equally important for any analysis of shame. However, in order to clarify the stand of Sartre it is to be made clear that Sartre did not mention anything like the critical gaze of the agent or the Other while analysing shame as the foundation of intersubjective relations. The following quotation may make it clear to an extent.

Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general being an object; that is, of recognizing myself in this degraded, fixed and dependent being which I am for the Other. Shame is the feeling of an original fall, not because of the fact that I may have committed this or that particular fault but simply that I have 'fallen' into the world in the midst of things and that I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am. (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 384)

It is to be made clear that Sartre considers shame to be particularly pre-reflective in nature. Shame is pre-reflective as it immediately acts on one's ontological structure. In the pre-reflective stage there is no judgement possible regarding the positive or negative interpretation of the observer on the agent. Shame occurs as the constitutive structure of one's existence. Shame shows that one is ontologically always bound by facticity. However, how a pre-reflective conscious state becomes aware of its objective status is not clarified in Sartre's analysis of the experience of shame.

The Second phase of criticism is related to Sartre's way of explanation. While explaining the immediate apprehension of the Other in the experience of shame Sartre presents the Other only as a 'look' which has no determined perceptible form. Dastur (2011) argues, if there is thus no real experience of the Other, as there is nothing that is really experienced in it then the experience of being "looked-at" is only an experience of my own self, the experience of a structure of my consciousness. Hence, instead of being

the experience of the Other shame rather seems to be the experience of the self. i. e., the experience of one's own finitude (Dastur, 2011, p. 169). His phenomenology of the Other is rather claimed to be a psychological description of the experience of shame than a phenomenological explanation. As Sartre holds that in the act of being 'looked' we can just experience a "pure monition" as the pure occasion of realizing my being "looked-at", nothing related to the other's body, his account of shame is therefore, claimed to be merely a self-reflection.

However, in defence of Sartre it is argued that although the experience of shame is claimed to be a first person feeling by critics, it is actually not so. Because, one is not ashamed of how she appears to herself, rather she is ashamed of how she appears to the Other. Unlike Scheler and Michael Lewis who gives a more psychological explanation considering shame as a self-reflective emotion, involving negative self-evaluation, Sartre regards shame as an emotion concerning our intersubjective relation, our "being-for-others" (Zahavi, 2011, pp. 215-216). The Other is always present there as a mediator in the phenomenon of shame. Hence, it is not correct to claim that shame reflects only a psychological self-relation; rather it is a mediated self-relation resulting in a triangular structure where the Other takes position between me and myself. Zahavi (2011), with extent illustrations tries to make it clear that though there are certain cases of shame that show the minimum involvement of the Other, which Zahavi prefers to term rather as cases of repentance, it does not necessarily imply that shame is only a self-reflecting psychological phenomenon always occurring without any social touch, i.e. without the mediation of the Other (Zahavi, 2011).

Sartre is, furthermore, claimed to have given the Other a transcendental status arguing that the Other is beyond experience. Dastur (2011) criticises Sartre for giving a more transcendental forum to the Other ignoring the phenomenal world. But in arguing so Sartre does not deny the empirical existence of the Other. Rather, he tries to affirm that the Other cannot be known as a subject. The moment one claims to know him, he no more remains the Other; because the Other is the subject who passes a 'look', a "look-looking", before whom one just remains as an object, as "looked-at", in the status of an "in-itself". Clearly, an "in-itself" cannot any way make any attempt to be conscious of the "for-itself", who is the Other as such.

Thus, after a thorough critical analysis of Sartre's account of shame as the foundation of intersubjectivity it can be said that even leaving scope for criticism, Sartre has achieved his target to establish the immediate encounter of the Other through the illustration of shame. Addressing the experience of shame, Sartre proves that the subjective self is no way in a privileged position as the earlier thinkers used to think. It is an attempt to recognize the Other, to show that my own perspective on the world is not the only one. There are other equally powerful perspectives too and I remain as an entity in the world as it is seen from Other's perspective. There can be others as well experiencing the world that includes me as an object (Webber, 2011, p. 189).

Nevertheless, in a similar tone with Dastur (2011) it is to admit that the experience of shame in its negativity cannot be accepted as the essential universal experience of the Other. However, it is also to be kept in mind that even Sartre also does not totally overlook the positive side of the intersubjective relation. Though he does not utter anything positive regarding the experience of shame which he considers to be the fundamental experience of human relation, he highlights a considerable positive side of otherness which leads one to dig out the ethics of co-operation hidden in Sartrean writings. Nevertheless, this part is left out here to be discussed in the fifth chapter.

### **3.4.2. Recovered Sense of Freedom in Sartre's Writings**

Alienation and its recovery against the Other is like an exchange game between two subjects which do not allow one another to remain subject. It is found that caught in the 'look' of the Other one loses freedom as the Other stands as a freedom in between, separating the spontaneous active consciousness from the body. But being nothingness consciousness cannot remain in its conflicting separated identity. To recover its selfhood or freedom "consciousness must freely disengage itself from the Other and wrench itself away by choosing itself as a nothingness which is simply other than the Other and thereby must be reunited in itself" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 387). This very detachment or nothingness, being the being of the "for-itself" ensures the existence of the Other, which is not me. Hunted by nothingness, consciousness in its perpetual resurrection chooses not to be the Other and ensures the internal negation that lies within. "Consciousness cannot-be the Other only in so far as it is consciousness (of) itself as not being the Other. Thus even being continuously penetrated by the Other in every moment,

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consciousness, precisely by being nothing escapes that threatening Other” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 378). Unlike the “in-itself” and the “for-itself”, the internal negation between consciousness and the Other is a relation of negative reciprocity. It is reciprocal in the sense that each exists denying the Other. Sartre holds that this negative reciprocity does not suggest that there are two consciousnesses. The negation between the Other and the “for-itself” is a spontaneous pre-numeric negation, where the Other exists for-consciousness only as a *refused self*. I refuse my refused Me; I determine myself as Myself by means of the refusal of the Me refused. The Other is always in relation to my for-itself. It is meaningful so far as my alienated identity is concerned. “The disappearance of the ‘alienated Me’ would involve the disappearance of the Other through the collapse of myself” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 386).

My “being-for-others” or my being-as-object is not any other consciousness cut off from me. It also bears the same reality as the “for-itself”. It is my self, confronting the Other and the Other’s self, confronting me (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 380). It is an exchange game between two subjects which does not allow one another to remain subject. My subjectivity gets limited at the confrontation of the Other. Since I am consciousness, my limitation is possible only by another consciousness. Hence “being-for-others” is the limit between two consciousness—the limiting consciousness as the producer and the limited consciousness as the assumer. This particular mode of being is neither the “in-itself” nor the “for-itself” as neither it is produced in pure indifference, nor it is the being which I have to be by nihilating myself. It is precisely my “being-for-others”.

While explaining “being-for-others” Sartre particularly talks about two negations. In the first the Other stands as a subject before me with its full freedom transcending my transcendence, and in the second I deny the freedom of the Other and consider it as a degraded consciousness, transcending its transcendence by exercising my freedom. My relation with the Other is such that at first moment I apprehend the Other as a subject revealed through my object-ness in my experience of shame, fear and pride and by the next moment I utilise the motivation supplied by the Other’s presence beyond my unrevealed limit and stand as a subject against the Other making an object out of him. As a reaction to the experience of shame my effort is concentrated at apprehending it as an

object who, at the first stage of negation apprehended me as an object. The moment I exercise my freedom in order to transcend its transcendence, the Other's subjectivity becomes a simple property of the object of my 'look'. His subjectivity though not abolished remains inside the "Other-as-object" in powerless or ineffective form. I am still connected with him as he has got some consciousness of me inside him, but as a recovered freedom I no more care this perception of the Other and consider it as ineffective interiority bereft of the power of giving me a fixed identity, as I have already recovered my free consciousness, which is all the time open for a new identity and cannot be conferred by the Other (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992). My confrontation with the Other thus reveals two stages of negations taking place in two different moments, the first is that for which I am not responsible, as it is controlled by the subject-ness of the Other and at the second stage, confronting the Other my self-consciousness gets reinforced and I negate the transcendence of the Other by making it an object in my world exercising my own possibility and responsibility. This is what Sartre calls the second negation, "that which proceeds from me to the Other" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 382). Sartre claims that "in this way I *recover* myself, for I cannot be *an object for an object*" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 384).

Sartre tries to sketch out this exchange game expressed in the force of 'look' in his short story *Erostratus* (1948/1969) through the character of Paul Hilbert, a killer or a murderous psychopath. *Erostratus* is claimed to be a philosophical tale about vision including a range of narrative on visual reference. The force of 'look' which Hilbert uses on Renée, the prostitute, showing her the gun, humiliating her physically, returns back to him when he takes rest in his hotel room after returning back from Renée. This entices him to kill Renée; he develops a feeling which presents Renée only as an "inert flesh" without any human quality. This is referred to as the primordial reaction to the Other's 'look' as defined in *Being and Nothingness*, where one constitutes himself as a 'look' in order to safeguard his subjectivity.

Sartre talks about only two possible modes of the self-other confrontation, where in the first I experience the subjectivity of the Other in my objectivity and in the second I reaffirm my subjectivity making the Other an object in my 'look'. In his previous behaviour with Renée he positioned her as an object humiliating her asserting his

freedom. But afterwards in his room at night, he sees her face again and gets caught in her 'look'. This shows that the conflict over visibility is unavoidable. Shattered by the feeling of being "looked-at" Hilbert comes to a decision that there is only one way to nullify the subjectivity of the Other; i.e., to kill her. As Kenaan (2000) notes, it is a case of internalisation of Sartrean ontology of gaze as presented in *Being and Nothingness*.

However, the attempt to destroy the image of oneself in the Other by destroying their own consciousness of the Other can never be successful. The look is so powerful that even after killing the person causing it, it may keep haunting. As Wreszin (1961) notes that in *No Exit* Garcin at the end realises that "they are condemned to see each other's hearts and ultimately see the Other's image of themselves..." (Wreszin, 1961, p. 43). Sartre's concept of 'look' can be compared to the metaphor of panopticon used by Foucault (Vaz, 1995) to symbolise the constant 'look' of the Other. In Sartre's words, "the Other is present everywhere, below me, above me, in neighbouring rooms, and I continue to feel profoundly my "being-for-others"" (as cited in Vaz, 1995, p 36). The same can be illustrated through a quotation from *The Flies* where Aegistheus expresses a kind of panopticon in demonstrating a form of "being-for-others":

Since I came to the throne, all I said, all my acts, have been aimed at building up an image of myself. I wish each of my subjects to keep that image in the foreground of his mind, and to feel, even when alone, that my eyes are on him, severely judging his most private thoughts. But I have been trapped in my own net. I have come to see myself only as they see me. I peer into the dark pit of their soul, and there, deep down, I see the image that I have built up. I shudder, but I cannot take my eyes off it. Almighty Zeus, who am I? Am I anything more than the dread that others have of me? (as cited in Wreszin, 1961, p. 44)

### **3.4.3. Concrete Relation with Others: Conflicting Intersubjectivity**

Thus, in the fundamental explanation of intersubjectivity, one's project of recovering becomes fundamentally a project of objectifying the Other and hence always conflicting. Each man bears intersubjectivity nourishing the Other within as one's essential structure of living. The 'for-itself', 'in-itself' and the 'for-others' can then be

said to represent various attitudes developed in one's relation to the Other. Thus when the concern is of concrete relation with the Other, it is entirely oriented by one's attitude towards the Other. It may take two forms depending on two basic "attitudes" of mine that I can assume concerning the Other when the Other passes 'look' at me with the attempt of making me an object. The objectification motivates me for two possible concrete responses with the motive of recovering freedom challenging the objectifying 'look' of the Other (Rosato, 2010, p. 90). The first possibility may be that I deny the object status conferred on me by the Other by turning back upon him making him an object and thereby recovering my freedom, or in the second possibility I admit the freedom of the Other as the foundation of my own being and without any attempt at recovering myself I rather incorporate the Other's freedom within me (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, pp. 471-473).

These two are actually two opposite attitudes as in the first I arrest the Other's freedom by transcending or denying it and in the second I admit it in order to appropriate. However, neither gives me scope for successfully recovering my freedom in either way confronting the threat of the Other (Rosato, 2010, p. 90). According to Sartre any involvement of an individual with the Other is so conflicting that he even finds the same nature of domination in love. Illustrating love he holds that the relation of love is a kind of appropriation of other's freedom unaltered, that is expected to be acquired by the lover, a sort of "gluing down the Other's freedom by itself" (Sartre J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, 1943/1992, p. 480). It is definitely not an attempt at enslaving the beloved as it will turn love into a more mechanical process of ownership. Rather the intention of the lover remains to "possess a freedom as freedom", ironically with a hidden demand that "this freedom as freedom should no longer be free" (Sartre J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, 1943/1992, p. 478).

Hence, my concrete relation with the Other is never a stable relation. Since I keep on trying to recover my freedom from the transcendence of the Other, it always remains conflicting. "I am in constant conflict with the Other, since my relation with him is always governed by my efforts to overcome the threat he possesses to my freedom" (Rosato, 2010, p. 91). "...while I attempt to free myself from the Other, the Other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to

enslave me...Conflict is the original meaning of “being-for-others” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 475).

It is never possible to realise the ideal of assimilation without compromising with the inbuilt internal negation by which the Other and I are recognised to be separate, i.e. the negation by which the Other is made other than I and I am made other than the Other. Hence the utopian idea of assimilation is difficult to realize in this sense. Assimilation necessarily implies the marginalization of the otherness of the Other and thereby making meaningless the entire problem. The essential relation between the Other and me, as discussed earlier is a relation of internal negation where I persists on denying that I am the Other. Hence by definition, rather than a relation of assimilation, it is essentially a relation of conflict (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 477).

The conflicting attitude according to Sartre is always reciprocal in nature. It is reciprocal in the sense that both I and the Other respond to the threat posed by each other. This reciprocity towards each other is actually backed by our non-reciprocity of the subjective status of each other. One’s motive is always to objectify the Other in his/her position and this is found active in both sides. I am objectified by the “Other-as-subject”, which in turn is made an “Other-as-object” in the second moment when I give back the same ‘look’ in order to defend my subjective status (Rosato, 2010, p. 92). Thus the relation between the self and the Other reflects inevitable conflict. Interestingly enough Sartrean use of the word ‘conflict’ is more in identification of two more attitudes than hostile intersubjective relationship. Because other than a dialectic relation there is a circularity kind of relation between the one and the Other. “...there is no dialectic for my relationship towards the other, but rather a circle” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 474).

Since the Other always remain present in the very core of oneself naturally both stand in a contradictory relationship only. The ‘look’ discloses this loss of control over how one is possessed by the Other. But it is a bad faith if we take a counter step to objectify the Other. In relationship of ideal love, Sartre looks forward to safeguard the two subjectivities and their respective freedoms. Despite the fact that we can never get rid of conflict as it is the original way of being with other, it is not because of hostility between the two but it is because “we can never get outside the circle”(Sartre J. P.,

1943/1992, p. 474). But he keeps room for ideal love and harmony of ‘subjects’, with ontological separation of two consciousnesses.

#### 3.4.4. “We-Subject” and “Us-Object”

With a critical note on Heidegger’s concept of *mitsein* or “being-with-others” Sartre, further strengthening the conflicting ontology of human relationship elaborates the concept like the “we-subject” and the “us-object”. Claiming “being-for-others” as the basic human relationship Sartre emphasises that “being-for-others” always precedes what Heidegger says “being-with-others”. “Being-with”, in Sartre’s understanding appears in two possible forms as the “we-subject” and the “us-object” representing the subject-object dichotomy in human social life.

The “we-subject”, which is a psychological unity devoid of any ontological structure, includes plurality of subjectivities without any scope of objectification (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 535). It has no relation to the experience of being “looked-at” and hence it is not a real unification. “We-subject” is reflected in the rhythmic work of a crew, in the march of soldiers. The best example of “we-subject” is according to Sartre the audiences at a theatre where one is non-positionally conscious of being with other co-spectators (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 535). Here no attempt is made to transcend Other’s possibilities. This is a stage of undifferentiated being. The experience of “we-subject” cannot alter my being in any way. “We-subject” is finally best explained as “our rhythm” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 550).

According to Sartre, the Heideggerian experience of “we-subject” is only a secondary and sub-ordinate experience. While talking about *Mitsein*, Heidegger does not consider it necessary to have some prior knowledge about the Other, which Sartre considers to be a must. If I am ontologically with someone, as “I am with\_\_\_\_\_”, then I must have some preliminary recognition of what the Other is (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 553). Having established the ‘we-subject’ as a mere psychological experience Sartre firmly stands on the point that the ontology of human reality is that “one must either transcend the Other or allow oneself to be transcended by him”, which necessarily indicates conflict rather than *Mitsein* (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 555).

In order to explain the social nature of alienation Sartre moves on to elaborate the Other shade of the 'we', the "we-as-object", better expressed as "us-object". The "us-object", a more complex modality of the "being-for-others", is community alienation or an alienated community in the presence of the 'Third'. In Sartre philosophy the transcendence-transcended relation occurs generally in between two poles-the self and the Other. But, while discussing the essence of the "us-object" Sartre brings forth the concept of the 'Third'. The essential character of the 'Third', which Sartre emphasizes on, is to objectify the Other who objectifies me. The 'Third' is 'Third' in the sense that it looks at the Other who is looking at me. It promotes a new ontological status where I and the Other become a common object and we oppose the 'look' in community.

At the face of the 'Third' I realise my similarity with the Other against whom I was defending my freedom till now. In spite of our personal conflicts we feel ourselves to be on the same side since our possibilities have now turned to be "equally dead possibilities for the Third" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 540). Thus, before the Third, the Other and I find ourselves in an objective situation common to both and unite ourselves with solidarity as a dominated group. In this organised whole which is experienced and formed non-thetically the otherness and distinctiveness of the Other gets merged and we stand united against the Other, e. i. the Third.

While explaining the experience of the "us-object" Sartre gives a Marxist hint in his writings when he defines "us-object" as a working class with group solidarity, apprehended by the 'Third' (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 542). Coming to a more concrete understanding out of the metaphysical explanation Sartre points out that materiality ties us as solid community, where we appear to be focused as instrument and technique of means. Emphasising on human situation Sartre holds that every human situation as situated and lived in the midst of the others, gets the identity of us, when confronted with the Third. "I am bound to the Other by the solidarity of the Us" (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 543). This is what Sartre refers to as "class consciousness"- representing the oppressed class against the domination of the oppressing class. Against the domination of the oppressing class it is the collective alienation which ties the bonding of the 'us'. "The oppressed class finds its class unity in the knowledge which the oppressing class has of

it, and the appearance among the oppressed as class consciousness corresponds to the assumption in shame of an ‘us-object’” (Sartre J. P., 1943/1992, p. 545).

### 3.5. Conclusion

In his earlier writings Sartre puts more emphasis on “being-for-others” as the fundamental mode of intersubjectivity and thereby presenting a thoroughly negative picture of human relations without considering any probable overcome. This is particularly based on his emphasis on individual freedom and the issue of recognition developed from Hegel. Focusing on these issues polished by his existential themes of emotion and imagination Sartre builds up his argument presenting the Other through the vulnerability of the self. Though Sartre criticises Descartes and Husserl of failing to address the intersubjective relation in proper way, it is seen that Sartre also falls in the same category as he cannot do justice to the relation in proper sense of the term. When the Other confronts the self we do not find two subjects but one subject reflected in the objectivity of its counterpart. Hence, a gap still remains there. However, the argument through which Sartre presents the evident presence of the Other undoubtedly has philosophical soundness.

Special mention can be made about the educative nature of this self-other dichotomy in Sartre that is also reflected in the philosophy of Levinas. For Levinas, the lesson taught by the Other is ethical. Unlike in Sartre in Levinas’s account the Other does not fix me as a body but arouses in me the sense of responsibility towards others. On the other hand, in Sartre, the educative nature of the Other is emphasised to be objectifying or limiting. As Guenther (2011) claims that arresting the spontaneity of my space and time it confines me to a fixed space and time as an object. It makes me a part of his world where no free status remains on my part.

Coming out of such demonic ‘look’ of Sartre, others, like Levinas and further Luce Irigaray gives a note of positive intersubjectivity inaugurated through a loving look where there no more remains subject-object dichotomy. The look of love finds out the invisible in the visible by uniting the possible spiritual aspect hidden behind the body. There is no subject pole against a distinct object pole. Love or caress opens up a realm where the two remains two but impossible of separation. It does not attempt to fix an

object for a subject. Love is a non-hierarchical relation where there cannot be any attempt at domination. Irigaray emphasises on loving an Other as Other without any attempt at reducing the counterpart to the self and this is possible only through “vigilant self- limitation”. Rather than being self-sacrifice, it is a phase of acknowledging our indebtedness to the Other.

The emphasis is that if the issue of recognition born from the notion of vision is given a reinterpretation, then only one can come out of the alienating notion of vision born with Hegel. Then only it can be realised that the other subject is not necessarily alienating or threatening and subject for annihilation. This way, as Kenaan (2000) insists, “Rather, the gaps or spaces between us open up the very possibility of communication and communion. Vision itself becomes a process, a becoming, rather than the sovereign of recognition. Vision becomes a circular energy between and among, rather than an artificial and inadequate bridge between a subject and an alien world” (Kenaan, 2000, p. 76).

Sartre is found taking a slightly broadened frame of intersubjectivity in his newer interpretation of Heideggerian “being-with” expressed through the “we-subject” and the “us-object”. From the perspective of social ontology, it is very significant that Sartre recognises two centres, the ‘us’ and the ‘we’, as collective aspects of man so that the static interpersonal relations of his early philosophy could be set in motion through their grounding in human history. Nevertheless it cannot be said to be a quite significant shift in his theoretical frame of negative intersubjectivity. While inclusion of the ‘us’ and the ‘we’ seems to fulfil a great gap in social ontology of *Being and Nothingness*, the ontological asymmetry still remains. In the words of Thomas Flynn (1984) the simple change that appears in the concept of the “us object” is that here “the relations of solidarity or equivalence are merely a translation into the plural of quite individualistic phenomena; the relation, as Sartre describes it, is one of juxtaposition, not synthesis” (Flynn, 1984, p. 26). Recognising “we-subject” as a psychological reality Sartre emphasises that ultimately subjective or psychological relations are not social at all. Social relations are rather represented through the “us-object”.

Thus, while discussing the different modes of being Sartre emphasises on the fact that “being-for-others” is the basic mode of human intersubjectivity. Pertaining to the

nature of objectification and alienation involved in “being-for-others” Sartre, with the illustration of shame highlights first on individual alienation realised at the appearance of the Other and later emphasises on the social nature of alienation reflected through the dichotomy of the oppressed and the oppressing groups at the face of the ‘Third’. His elaboration of social alienation in the form of the “us-object” before the ‘Third’ reveals the nature of class consciousness in the materialistic society which gets widely explained by Karl Marx in the historical context. This social shade of consciousness reflected through Sartre’s understanding of the individual’s concrete relation with the Other inspires us to proceed to a discussion on the similarity and differences between Marx and Sartre concerning the issue of alienation. This leads to the next chapter.



## CHAPTER-IV

### OTHERNESS AND ALIENATION IN SARTRE'S LATER WRITINGS: THE MARXIST PHASE

Though Sartre's philosophy is commonly understood through his arguments presented in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre considers his later writing, particularly the two volumes of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, to be the real philosophy advanced for the concrete human reality. This is a phase when Sartre's philosophy takes a social turn emphasising on the freedom of the oppressed section of the society which leads him to include Marxist explanations into the fold of his individual centred philosophy while dealing with the problems of freedom, alienation and oppression. Hence taking this new phase into consideration this chapter delves into the relation of Sartre's philosophy to Marxism, highlighting the concept of alienation in a comparative frame in both the ideologies. The main objective of the chapter is to see how Sartre accommodates Marxism and what sort of new orientation comes out of it.

#### Part I

##### 4.1. Introduction

The existing literature provides some mixed impression regarding the Marxists influence on Sartre. Where one section argues that Sartre, in his later period, has completely surrendered to Marxism, the other argues the two systems to be completely incompatible and hence irreconcilable. In this connection Lichtheim (1963) argues that the goal of Sartre's work, particularly in *Critique of Dialectical Reason (1960)* is nothing less than the concept of Marxist philosophy. Among many similarities between Sartre and Marx, emphasising on their common motto to change the world, Lichtheim considers Sartre to be very close to Marxism. However, the compatibility of Marxism and Existentialism is sceptically seen by different writers. Novack (2002) presents a detailed comparative picture between Existentialism and Marxism considering most of the common features of both the trends. He argues that though Sartre worked out his original existentialist ideas as a deliberate challenge to Marxism, paradoxically in the late 1950s he embraced Marxism. However, Novack expresses doubt about the compatibility

of these two trends of thought and tries to show the fundamental diversities between them in his writings. Criticising Sartre, he writes that the phenomenologist of existence who condemned Dialectical Materialism as false and a foe to human freedom has turned to declare existentialism as a subordinate branch of Marxism in his philosophical treatise *Critique of Dialectical Reason* in 1960. Going against Sartre's stand Novack declares both the philosophical trends to be of fire-water relation, which are so divergent that they cannot really be reconciled. A similar hint is found in Delacampagne (1999) when he argues that though Sartre asserts Marxism and Existentialism to be complementary, they are fundamentally seen to be incompatible. However, with a detail comparative discussion Kiernan (1981) argues that Sartrean Existentialism and Marxism are quite compatible and the claim that Sartre violates Marx is not true. Further, Sayers argues that the attempts (Pappenheim 1959; Sachacht 1971) to merge Existentialism and Marxism have never been satisfactory. However, it does not mean that the two trends are totally distinct. Further within both the traditions common stands are present (Sayers, 2003).

In this backdrop, this chapter tries to sketch out the issues related to the association and differentiation between Sartrean Philosophy and Marxism concentrating on the factor of alienation, as Sartre develops his socio-political philosophy writing against the oppression and alienation of common people.

#### **4.2. Alienation: The Concept**

Being surrounded by incredible degree of confusion the concept of alienation does not pertain to a clearheaded definition and treated in diverse ways in different branches of thought. The dictionary meaning of the term "Alienation" is "estrangement". Referring to Pietro Chiodi, Birt (1986) notes, "In the most general way, alienation can be defined as the process whereby someone or something ... is constrained to become "other" than that which it properly is in its being" (as cited in Birt, 1986, p. 293). Considered from the subjective point of view alienation is said to imply a "strange feeling of being in a situation with which one is not in harmony" (Sinari, 1970, p. 125). In the Indian context, Daya Krishna, like the existentialists, defines alienation as "an awareness of the other and a felt estrangement from it, accompanied with a feeling that this ought not to be so ... Alienation 'is woven into the very texture of man'" (as cited in

Sinari, 1970, p. 127). As like the existentialists Daya Krishna also hesitates to define alienation as a complete loss of control and leaves scope for dialogue as an attempt at overcoming alienation. Further, Mészáros, discussing Marx's theory of alienation, holds that "The alienation of human kind, in the fundamental sense of the term, means the loss of control: its embodiment in an alien force which confronts the individual as hostile and potentially destructive power" (Mészáros, 2006, p. 8). Briefly, alienation stands as an umbrella concept incorporating many other dimensions as powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, cultural estrangement and self alienation.

Though the concept has a long and distinguished history, it got prominence only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the Industrial Revolution when material demands overtook all other necessities of man. The overall influence of Feuerbach and primarily of Hegel is evident in the subsequent theoretical discussions especially in the development and also derivation of the notion of alienation as such despite many other differences in their respective developments. In this process alienation came to prominence as a state of experience of an individual or a group facing material "conflict with the rest of the society" (Sinari, 1970, p. 123).

#### **4.2.1. The Legacy of the Concept: Hegel**

Though any discussion on alienation primarily refers to Marxism, the Hegelian input cannot be undermined in serious discussion of the problem of alienation. The true history of alienation is claimed to have initiated in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) (Bottomore, 1998). Through the dialectical development of the self Hegel expounded an idealistic position of alienation and its overcoming. In later period the concept got widely treated in Marxism and Existentialism.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* alienation is translated into two German words- *Entfremdung* (estrangement) and *Entausserung* (externalization). '*Entfremdung*' describes a stage where consciousness is separated from, at least one of the aspects that are required for consciousness to fully understand itself. In contrast, *Entausserung* describes the process whereby consciousness opens itself towards the external world and externalises itself in object form and, through this objectification, develops a better

understanding of itself (Rae, 2012). Primarily, Estrangement (*Entfremdung*) is the exact term that refers to alienation in Hegelian analysis. This is the stage where consciousness does not involve into the dialectical process of objectification and remains confined within its pure subjectivity, separated from the objective world. Consciousness, in order to understand what it truly is, needs to have self-realisation by objectifying itself with the sense that it is always intimately connected to independent objects rather than being a pure subjectivity completely separate from the object. Externalisation contributes to the process whereby consciousness comes to fully understand its ontological structure.

In Hegel's analysis, absolute knowing is considered to be the ultimate stage of consciousness to be achieved in order to overcome alienation. It is the stage when consciousness no more confines itself in its subjectivity but realises the spiritual unity of subjectivity and objectivity. In the process of reaching the ultimate stage consciousness has to forgo the certainty of itself that its previous shape gave it. This stage of absolute knowing is what Hegel calls *Spirit* (Rae, 2012, p. 29). Hegel's concept of alienation mainly touches the psychological and spiritual aspect of human being. Since reality is essentially spiritual for him estrangement is therefore primarily to the consciousness. Thus, unfreedom or alienation is a moment when an individual confines himself into the periphery of his own ideals, norms and decision without recognising himself as a member of the greater community. According to Hegel, the world in which we live is created by ourselves to a considerable extent, where the "social substance" constitutive of social, political and cultural institutions are sustained by human existence and activity (Steiner, 1997, p. 42). Hence, human nature is defined by this social substance and therefore, in order to attain universality and overcome alienation it is necessary to unite oneself with the social substances and recover human nature. The self or better the *Spirit* for Hegel, is social and historical, that develops in the social condition in unrestricted way through a process of alienation and overcoming (Sayers, 2003).

Unlike Descartes and others, Hegel emphasises on the historical and social dimension of the self that needs an exploration to re-discover its own basic nature through a process of alienation and self-estrangement to reconciliation, self-recognition and an overcoming of alienation. He believes in the constructive and positive role of alienation that allows consciousness to overcome this stage through the process of

objectification. The finite self is restricted by its opposite, nature and it finally overcomes this by raising nature in thought through theoretical activity and practical activity in a harmonious manner. The self, thus, expresses itself and leaves its stamp in nature also by realising its own subjectivity through a process of objectivity itself. Thus alienation in Hegel also has an objective side to it and its overcoming requires specific objective conditions and through these moments of objectification and negativity the subject rediscovers its own subjective essence. So, overcoming alienation in his view lies in surrendering individuality to social substance. Hegel significantly emphasises on the fact that to be an individual means to belong to a community (Steiner, 1997).

Man is essentially socio-political-historical and spiritual at the same time and these two dimensions of social and spiritual are thus sought to be united. Social institutions play a role here in alienating from its authentic essence and also in restoring that essence through an overcoming of alienation through participation in the social world. Through a process of progressive-regressive developments this process of overcoming of alienation continues and also evident in the original unity as manifested in Polis. Then through gradual division and disintegration again an attempt is made at restoring that integrated state in a 'State', an assembly of self-conscious individuals for sharing common pursuits. However there are differences of opinion regarding the role of state in overcoming alienation in the opinion of Rousseau, Marx and Sartre. While Hegel refers to the state for overcoming alienation Marx holds that there is already a fall of the phenomenon of state in a capitalist society. Rousseau also in a similar tone holds that a state is not the actual reflection of a community life as in the state also the voice of the rich section is always heard.

#### **4.2.2. Marx on Alienation**

While according to Hegel surrendering of individuality for harmonious and constructive social participation is the pre-requisite for overcoming alienation, according to Marx, surrendering is utterly the coercive relation of the labourer to the capital, where one's humanity is lost and identity gets alienated. If in Hegel reason overcomes alienation, for Marx alienation is a special problem of the working class who are now dehumanised, exploited and are thing-like devoid of reason and reflection.

Marx presents his theory of alienation in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844*. In a capitalist society the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production which are always found to be coercive in structure. As the workers always perform their functions in a forced environment, in such a system labour is always external to the worker, and hence does not belong to their essential being. He cannot work freely as per his mental and physical energy and this ruins his body and mind. Hence he remains outside his work without attachment. He feels comfortable when he does not work and when he works he feels not at home (Marx & Engels, 1844/2011). The social arrangement of the capitalist society is such that it is unable to provide the opportunities to decide on the type of work the workers perform. The capitalists have increased the workers' ability to work harder, faster and for long period of time, but they have deprived the workers from the personal wealth which comes from the product they produce. It has deprived the working class from meaningful and creative existence. They inevitably lose control over their lives and selves and can never become autonomous and self-realised human beings. Their freedom gets arrested in the hands of the bourgeois. In such a forced situation of self-sacrifice, where the labour is completely external to the worker, he is left alone only with the animal functions like eating, drinking etc. It is not that alienation is manifested only in the result of the production; rather the entire production activity is overpowered by the phenomenon of alienation (Marx & Engels, 1844/2011, p. 52). Thus in the capitalist production system the relationship between men is transformed into a relationship between things that overpowers human relationships. The world of objects overpowers the human world and man is turned against his basic nature in alienation from his needs and capacities (Steiner, 1997, p. 13).

Redirecting the focus on the mode of production, in general, and to the property system of capitalism, in particular, Marx translates Hegelian notion of alienation as a universal human phenomenon into English political economy and its special system of categories. Alienation is more an alienated stage of persons as producers and their production of use values and commodities. However, this need not appear as a major change in Hegel as unlike Kant and others, Hegel was the most economically literate idealist philosophers who dwelt sufficiently on the concept of labour although not associating alienation with labour rather focussing more on the liberating effect of it. Of

course Marx drifts away from Hegel's general theoretical source towards more concrete, societal level of species dimension of man than other abstract and theoretical possibilities. This can be viewed as a move towards historicising and also relativising Hegel's theory of alienation.

According to Marx, Hegel's argument is one sided and limited to the positive side of labour only. He grasps labour as the essence of man wholly concentrating one-sidedly on the valuable functions that labour performed for humanity and thereby ignoring the negative side of it where they are exploited by the capitalist class. Marx's interpretation of alienation is based on the political economic explanation. On the basis of political economy he explains how the working class gets sandwiched between the capitalist class and their own labour. Labour is now identified as the major site of human alienation. Following the dialectic of Hegel, Marx introduces the concept of alienation in a proper theoretical way. While Hegelian interpretation of alienation remains centrally confined to the idealist standpoint, Marx's theory gets developed in a historical base in terms of alienation of the labour or the working class. Accepting all earlier interpretations he applies the concept in the production system introducing it as a distinct theory in the field of both economics and sociology. His ground is more a socio-economic one, related to production relation in a capitalist society.

Presenting itself as purely a social philosophy Marxism considers the self as a social creation that is drawn by needs and capacities. According to Marx, man's essential nature is defined by the reciprocal relation between his needs and capacities. Human need is specifically to maintain his physical existence in coordination with nature and the means to satisfy this need is his labour or the productive activity or life activity. He claims the productive activity to be so specific to man that he identifies it with his life activity and calls it the species character. Marx emphasises on the free and conscious activity of man as his life activity or species character. It is not that the animals do not perform life activity. But the difference is that they get merged in their life activity without being able to distinguish between it and their existence. But the peculiarity of man is that man can make his life activity the object of his will and can take conscious decision over it. It is this conscious life-activity that distinguishes man from animal and

signifies him as “species being”<sup>7</sup> (Marx & Engels, 1844/2011, p. 54). Since “species being” is the universal essence, the activities and capabilities of man gets developed through social practices, and hence in a way the essence of man may be termed as socialised labour (Steiner, 1997, p. 12). By employing the senses and through the conscious exercise of man’s natural capacities to lift, strike, mould and shape, man objectifies the natural world and thereby defines his essential nature as species being (Steiner, 1997). Unlike animals man produces in accordance with the laws of beauty and nature. He does not merely produce for himself but in accordance with the standard of every species. Therefore, when he works he objectifies himself into it consciously, intellectually, physically and reflects himself through his creation (Marx & Engels, 1844/2011). But in a capitalist mode of production this essence is interrupted. Under the capitalist pressure, man gets alienated from his essential nature, from his conscious free activity and thus from his species life.

Mészáros (2006) mentions four types of alienation in labour under capitalism as pointed out by Marx:

- Alienation of the worker from his or her ‘species essence’ i.e. from himself.
- Alienation between workers, from the fellowmen. Capitalism reduces labour to a commodity to be traded on the market and hence, the workers get deprived of any social relationship and remain alienated from the fellowmen.
- Alienation of the worker from the product. Since the product is appropriated by the capitalist class, it escapes the worker's control.
- Alienation from the act of production itself. The workers cannot work according to their choice and hence, his work becomes meaningless activity, offering little or no intrinsic satisfactions.

Distinctly, according to Marx, alienation is caused by capitalist relations. However, though Marx’s discussion of alienation in the *Manuscripts* emerges through the critique of political economy, its scope never remains limited to the discussion of

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<sup>7</sup>“Species being” is primarily Feuerbach’s terminology which Marx used in discussing alienation in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844*. However, the meaning and connotation is Marx’s own. He applies the term to mean “the universal essence that contains all the specificities of man’s successive modes of social relations” (Steiner, 1997, p. 12).

economic activities understood in the narrow sense. According to him, estrangement of labour dominates almost every realm of our life spiritual, political and religious, and alienates man from his essence in all these spheres. Hence it is emphasised that no sphere of human activity is free from alienation as long as man lives in a society characterised by estrangement of labour (Steiner, 1997). Despite the fact that alienation in Marx is mostly understood in terms of exploitation under capitalist production some aspects of the Hegelian legacy remain in Marx. For left Hegelians, including Marx, alienation is the division and then an attempt at reconciliation of original species identity in a trauma torn industrialised Europe, but they also aimed at reconciliation of reason with social aspects of reality.

#### **4.2.3. Overcoming Alienation**

Though Marx, like Hegel applies the dialectal process<sup>8</sup> in order to understand the production system as materialistic evolution, his solution for overcoming alienation is not confined to this dialectical movement alone. Unlike Hegel, Marx's analysis of the concept of alienation in its core is essentially revolutionary. He considers overcoming alienation as a practical task, where man can de-alienate himself by emancipating private property and labour. According to Marx, in order to overcome alienation revolutionary practice in mind is quite necessary (Steiner, 1997). The only way to overcome alienation is to abolish the system of private property as well as social division of labour along with the natural bonding established between the producers and the means of production. However, this is not a simple process that can be awaited to happen in a dialectical process of evolution. It is, rather, a historical process that demands common people's active involvement to revolt against the system and change the entire alienating production system.

Contrary to Hegel, who considers private property to be essential for the improvement of human life, Marx holds that "human essence of man" cannot be realised except through the abolition of private property. Moreover, he also considers alienated

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<sup>8</sup>The dialectic process which is also applied by Marx to a considerable extent is primarily named after Hegel. Hegel used it to mean the process of development through contradictory movements. The Dialectical method thus consists of three stages, first being the thesis, contradicted by the antithesis, and finally the contradiction is resolved in a stage which is called the synthesis.

labour to be the other side of the same phenomenon of private property manifesting itself in another form (Steiner, 1997, p. 48). Hence, the abolition of private property implies the abolition of all forms of alienation and realisation of human nature as a species being. Emphasising on the role of private property that it plays in the entire process of alienation and its overcoming Marx and Engels write, “the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property”(Marx & Engels, 1888/2002, p. 235).

Thus, from Hegel to Marx, the concept undergoes a transition towards “alienation of productivity” from “alienation of creativity”. Materialism takes the place of the idealistic interpretation of Hegel. With this new interpretation alienation gets shifted from being a condition of the man of reason, to be a condition belonging to a specific class of men in the factory, making them deprived of their own reason by this condition of life (Horowitz, 1966, p. 231). Sean Sayers claims Hegelian position to be more comprehensive than Marx in dealing with the issue of alienation. It is argued that modern individual is not limited to the performance of social roles alone. Choice, freewill and negative liberty equally play important role in it. This fact is emphasised in both Hegelian and existentialist treatment but neglected in Marx. Marxist writings emphasise only on the social role of man and consider social change to be sufficient for the transformation and realisation of the self (Sayers, 2003).

Nevertheless, the problem of alienation is not so simple that its essence can be understood remaining only in the periphery of the spiritual ideals or materialistic structure. It is argued that neither Hegel nor Marx could touch the root of the problem. Since alienation primarily relates to the human beings living amidst different existential problems along with practical social issues, it needs a deeper understanding of the existential issues which remained unattended by the earlier thinkers. To fill up this gap Existentialism appeared in the field discussing the problem of alienation in a deeper level and thereby advancing some way out.

#### **4.2.4. Existentialists’ view on Alienation**

Existentialism follows Hegel and Marx assigning to philosophy the task of curing people from the sense of alienation. Emphasising on the primacy of the issue of

alienation in existentialism, William Barrett (1990) writes that alienation and estrangement constitute the whole problematic of existentialism. However, Mészáros expresses his reservation regarding this stand pertaining to the internal differences seen in the trend of existentialism. For example, for Kierkegaard alienation is only a peripheral problem to which he tries to give a religious explanation. But, it is argued that alienation, in its fundamental sense, cannot be defined in religious way alone. Referring to E. Mounier, Mészáros argues, “One cannot discuss fundamental estrangement from a Christian standpoint” (Mészáros, 2006, p. 337). According to him, the “crisis of man”, which the existentialists emphasise on, is always historically specific and any serious discussion can be considered to be worthy only if it takes into consideration the socio-historical framework of the issue. Such reflection on alienation in the socio-historical situation, is found in the post War writings of Jean Paul Sartre unlike other existentialist philosophers like Kierkegaard, Jaspers, and Marcel. For Sartre, alienation as the deprivation of freedom is the central issue to concentrate on, while dealing with the intersubjective human relations in a materialistic historicity. Sartre’s existential phenomenology provides an in-depth understanding of the issue of alienation experienced in any sphere of life. It is interesting to see how Sartre presents his treatment of alienation in a quite significant way even maintaining the legacy from Hegel and Marx.

Sean Sayers (2003) considers the concept of alienation as the most important and fruitful legacies of Hegel’s social philosophy which gets focused in the contemporary social thought through the trends of Marxism and existentialism. Showing a line of difference between these two trends however, it is argued that where Marxism treats alienation in a socio-economic level, describing and criticising the social and economic conditions of capitalism, existentialism mainly uses the concept in a more ontological and spiritual manner, particularly referring to a psychological or spiritual kind of discomfort pervasive in modern society (William, 1990). The discussion of alienation after Hegel, Sayers notes, has become murky and confused for mixing up these two quite different concepts which have little real connection with each other (Sayers, 2003). However the discussions in this chapter make it quite evident that while we come to the treatment of alienation presented in the existential phenomenology of Sartre, it provides a good ground to compare it with that of Marxism.

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The immediate ground for connecting the two philosophers lies in the fact that Sartre himself openly confirms his inclination towards Marxism in his later phase and suggests some measures to make Marxism more appropriate theory for humankind with some existential input. Further, literature shows that the two trends are not totally distinct. Within both the traditions both strands are present. As Sayers (2003) notes, “Both Marxism and Existentialism are united in rejecting Hegel’s uncritical picture of modern society. Both strands of thought see alienation and inauthenticity as endemic to it and base their critique of modern society on this” (Sayers, 2003, p. 12). Moreover, it is argued that in Marxism and Sartrean existentialism alienation is both the essential hardship of modern humanity as well as a kind of inspiration for change. However, there are some subtle differences as well. While according to Sartre this change can only authentically take place in the will of the individual, according to Marx, this change must be economic, social and political. Thus, bringing the comparative picture into the frame we can now concentrate on the main concern of the chapter, which is to analyse the similarities and differences between the Existential Phenomenology of Sartre and Material Dialectic of Marx concentrating on the issue of alienation and otherness in particular.

## Part II

### 4.2.4.1. Sartre on Alienation: Two Interpretations and Difference from Marxism

Throughout his long engagement with man and freedom Sartre is found to hold two interpretations of the concept of alienation. One is Ontological and the other is Historical, which can also be interpreted as his early and later philosophy respectively. The major arguments on the ontological feature of his philosophy is found in his momentous literary work *Being and Nothingness* and the historical materialistic accounts gets elaborated in the two volumes of *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960 & 1985) along with some other writing like *Materialism and Revolution* (1946) etc.. The most significant theme in Sartre’s concept of alienation is the notion of otherness which plays a pivotal role in the analysis of the concept in different levels. Robert E. Birt (1986) in “Alienation in the Later Philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre” emphasises this very fact in tracing the development of the concept of alienation from Sartre’s early philosophy to later philosophy expressed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In order to show the

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centrality of the notion of the Other in the treatment of alienation, Birt refers to Pietro Chiodi's broad definition expounded in his book *Sartre and Marxism* (1978). Referring to Sartre, Chiodi defines alienation "as the process whereby someone or something ... is constrained to become 'other' than that which it properly is in its being" (Birt, 1986, p. 293). From Sartre's philosophical writings two notions of alienation can be traced out which necessarily entail the condition of otherness. In the first sense, as depicted in the *Critiques*, Sartre's alienation is historical and said to be the consequence of exploitation and oppression, as like in Marx. But in its deeper sense, alienation is said to be structurally rooted in human existence and this second sense of alienation is found to be the foundation of historical alienation in Sartre's philosophy (Birt, 1986).

Nevertheless, the shade of otherness is also seen in Marx though not as prominently as in Sartre. In Marx's theory the products of labour or the objectified labour are ornamented with the qualities of the Other in the form found in Sartre's phenomenology of existence. To quote Marx,

Thus, if the product of his labor, his labor *objectified*; is for him an *alien*, hostile, powerful object independent of him, then his position towards it is such that someone is master of this object, someone who is alien, hostile, powerful and independent of him. If his own activity is to him an unfree activity, then he is treating it as activity performed in the service, under the dominion, the coercion and the yoke of another man (Marx & Engels, 1844/2011, p. 56).

The product's being alien to the labour or confronting him implies that it belongs to someone else, i.e. to a being other than me. The significance of the Other in a socially situated human reality can be found in such interpretation of Marx's theory of alienation (Marx & Engels, 1844/2011, p. 58). However, Marx's overemphasis on material dialectic overrides the latent otherness in the problem of alienation.

#### **4.2.4.1.1. Early View: Unrestricted Freedom and Conflicting Individuals**

The base of Sartre's ontological view on alienation is built up in his early writings, particularly in *Being and Nothingness*. Here Sartre discusses alienation as an

ontological possibility rather than a surpassable historical condition. Alienation, according to him entails the condition of “otherness” and it is rooted in human existence, in one’s relation with the Other. The discussion in this book is more of psychoanalysis as he mainly concentrates on individual consciousness in the form of nothingness. The aspect of history does not get considered in these writings. As Yovel (1979) notes,

All that Sartre says about man in *Being and Nothingness*—his structure, his condition, his freedom and spontaneity, his relation to other man and the world- is conceived in non-historical terms, as man’s fixed and eternal fate. Man is portrayed as perpetually transcending himself and any given content and state; his very being is in flux, unable to attain a stable identity, and only by activity and development can he assume some discernible characteristics or ‘essence’. (Yovel, 1979, p. 482)

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre particularly uses the term ‘look’ to mean the alienating condition of the individual in terms of the existence of the Other. The Other, by his ‘look’ arrests all my free possibilities and gives me the sense of being objectified and alienated from myself. In the early writings Sartre avoids the significance of historical situation at any level of fundamental ontology. Concentrating more on the individual freedom he seems to consider every other perspective as a threat to one’s possibilities and hence considers them to be the reason for alienation.

It has already been explained that Sartre’s concept of the Other is inextricably related to the concept of freedom. When the issue of individual freedom is considered in more restricted sense without taking into consideration the cooperative intersubjective relations then the issue of otherness reverberates more. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre’s concept of freedom sounds quite radical and so the sense of otherness too. But after the War experience Sartre has realised the limitation of freedom and significance of social situation and the importance of common consciousness and social consciousness in dealing with practical problems of life.

#### 4.2.4.1.2. Later View: Conditioned Freedom, Reciprocal Relations, War Experiences: The Marxist Phase

Since Sartre argues his philosophy to be a philosophy of man, it cannot certainly remain confined into trivial things like shame, pride, love etc. What it needs to consider, is the real and deeper problem of human existence which showed its face in the Second World War, where individual liberty remained much subsided in community's grief. And Sartre is certainly found responding to the situation in his later writings where he essentially situates freedom amidst constraints and reiterates about obstacles in exercising freedom. In his matured writings and interviews, Sartre expresses the need of some modifications in his earlier view on freedom realising the practical complications of the real world, which remains ignored in *Being and Nothingness*. In *Being and Nothingness* he concentrates on the dialectic of "being-in-itself" and "being-for-itself" on the ontological level with least consideration of the situation and environment that may condition human freedom. Hence, he considered man as freedom, without any restriction. The reason behind this, Sartre feels, may be that the social set up was quite encouraging for the radical motto of freedom during that period and he declared his plays written during that period as "theatre of freedom" (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 33). But, he admits that, life has taught him a lot about circumstances after the Second World War and, hence, the reflection is visible in his later philosophy as well. He, further, admits that from the time of his first imprisonment<sup>9</sup> he started to learn what human reality actually means amidst things and he realises the significance of human reality as a "being-in-the-world". He got shocked when he later went through his statement, "Whatever the circumstances, and whatever the site, a man is always free to choose to be the traitor or not..." (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 34). During that time just to have courage meant a lot and hence with the circumstantial enthusiasm Sartre put forward his view on undeterred freedom and emphasised on the possibility of free choice in any circumstances. Later Sartre realises it to be a false conception. Particularly after the Second World War his subject centred view of freedom is found taking socio-political turn. The War aroused in Sartre the true experience of society. In an interview Sartre

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<sup>9</sup>During the Second World War, in 1940 Sartre was arrested by the German force when he was serving as a meteorologist in the French army. In these nine months of imprisonment Sartre is said to have read Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Source: "The Famous People", <http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/jean-paul-sartre-234.php>, accessed on 18/2/2014.

says that “Every man is political, But I did not discover that for myself until the War, and I did not truly understand it until 1945” (as cited in Flynn, 1979, p. 162). In the same context Morris (2008) notes, “---the whole trajectory of his thinking since his first visit to the States in 1945 shows a dawning awareness of the social and political dimension of freedom” (Morris, 2008, p. 15). Quoting Beauvoir, Morris argues “Sartre thought that any situation could be transcended by subjective effort; in 1951, he knew that circumstances can sometimes steal our transcendence from us; in that case, no individual salvation is possible, only a collective struggle” (as cited in Morris, 2008, p. 15).

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre portrays the Other with a threatening ‘look’ that always threatens one’s free possibilities. But in the *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1983) and also to certain extent in the *Critique*, Sartre is found to concentrate more on the situational lived experiences than emphasising too much on individual freedom. Here, even recognising the spontaneity of freedom, he holds that in order to materialise freedom historical situation is a necessary precondition. Without any such situation freedom cannot be exercised in void. Sartre writes,

...men make History to precisely the extent that it makes them. This means that relations between men are always the dialectical consequence of their activity to precisely the extent that they arise as a transcendence of the dominating and institutionalised human relations. Man exists for man only in given circumstances and social conditions, so every human relation is historical. (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 97)

In this connection, Sartre further emphasises that historical situation always involves man’s collective activity. Here, the identity of the Other no more remains the monstrous subject. Rather, in such a situation each human being can be considered as a support to the Other’s identity formation which is not possible without that aid. In the *Critiques* Sartre considers each individual as member of a group or a class. Subjectivity of the individual becomes enriched as a group member and as such yields a collective subject without reducing the respective individual to mere code of some collective consciousness.

Yovel argues that this communality of projects implies a significant modification in Sartre's old theory of freedom. When historicised, the spontaneity of freedom gets limited in the situational conditions and historically man enjoys only "relative autonomy" as "he is not free from the historical context but within it" (Yovel, 1979, p. 492). Sartre accepts such a relative sense in his matured writings and interviews. To emphasise on it Sartre is quoted here:

To understand how I could have done so, you must remember that there was a very simple problem during the Resistance-ultimately, only a question of courage. One had to accept the risks involved in what one was doing, that is, of being imprisoned or deported. But beyond this? A Frenchman was either for the Germans or against them, there was no other option. The real political problems, of being 'for, but' or 'against, but', were not posed by this experience. The result was that I concluded that in any circumstances, there is always a possible choice. Which is false. Indeed it is so false that I later wanted precisely to refute myself by creating a character in *Le Diable et Le Bon Dieu* [*The Devil and the Good Lord*, 1951], Heinrich, who cannot choose. He wants to choose, of course, but he cannot choose either the Church, which has abandoned the poor, or the poor, who have abandoned the Church. He is thus a living contradiction, who will never choose. He is totally conditioned by his situation (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 34).

Nevertheless, though after the Second World War Sartre considerably comes out of the heroic experience of freedom, he still continues with his views on individual responsibility. In the post War socially conditioned human experience man still remains responsible for what he does. Sartre insists that "in the end one is always responsible for what is made of one" (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 34). It is not exactly similar to become absolutely free. Rather, responsibility may be said to be a limit to freedom exercised in social set up. Assuming responsibility is such a step that man can give a new turn to what he is made of, without surrendering to the situation. Referring to *Saint Genet* (1952), Sartre argues that freedom does not necessarily indicate triumph. It basically implies

taking a new step, not already given amidst all situational adversities, as Saint Genet did (Sartre J. P., 1952/2012).

Thus, a subtle shift is observed in Sartre's philosophical developments from his early to the later phase of discussions. Significantly it is seen that mostly Sartre is dragged to criticisms concerning his views expressed in his magnum opus *Being and Nothingness* without taking into consideration the modifications in his later views. However, in later interviews, Sartre clarifies that what he can call his real philosophy is not the philosophy of *Being and Nothingness* but that developed after the Second World War. *Being and Nothingness* has particularly expressed "an interior experience, without any ordination with the exterior experience of a petty-bourgeois intellectual which had become historically catastrophic at a certain moment"(Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 35). Towards 1960s Sartre considers the themes of *Being and Nothingness*, like "subjectivity" and "objectivity" as useless notions. He says,

I might still use the term 'objectivity', I suppose, but only to emphasise that everything is objective. The individual interiorizes his social determinations: he interiorizes the relations of production, the family of his childhood, the historical past, the contemporary institutions, and he then re-exteriorizes these in acts and options which necessarily refer us back to them. None of these existed in L'Étre et le Néant(Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 35).

This shift, taking into its fold the social determinations and relations of production, give a Marxist image of Sartre's later works.

#### **4.3. Marx's Influence on Sartre: Phase Wise**

It is argued that Sartre has not suddenly turned over to focus on the Marxist way of expression in his later writings. Rather, he was always an admirer of Marx's writings since 1934 itself, where Sartre has expressed lenience towards Historical Materialism<sup>10</sup> claiming it to be the most "fruitful hypothesis for interpreting history" (Delacampagne,

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<sup>10</sup>Historical Materialism is a framework described by Marx and Engels as the moving power behind significant historical movements. It implies that changes in the production system in society leads to the formation of different social organizations and to social conflict(Blackburn, 2008)

1999, p. 197). As Jameson (1974) argues, it is pretty expected because Marxism in Europe is such a living mode of thought that it is not possible for any intellectual to remain totally unconcerned about the ideas propounded by Marx while developing their own kind of interpretation of facts. Marxist influence of Existentialism is identified by Jameson as an “attraction at distance” (Jameson, 1974, p. 206). Regarding the similarity between Marxism and Sartrean existentialism he holds,

Marxism is a way of understanding the objective dimension of history from the outside; existentialism is a way of understanding subjective, individual experience. The “search for a Method” therefore does not take the form of a reconciliation of contraries, but rather a kind of unified field theory in which two wholly different ontological phenomena can share a common set of equations and be expressed in a single linguistic or terminological system. (Jameson, 1974, p. 208)

In developing this modified version of the Sartrean philosophy in Marxist tune, the influence of the philosophical approaches of other philosophers like Maurice Merleau-Ponty is quite significant. It was Ponty who made the first attempt to combine Marxism and existentialism to certain extent (Craib, 1976). In a review of *Being and Nothingness*, Ponty notes the necessity of incorporating history into the fold of philosophy in order to have a better understanding of the world. Hence, he suggests for the integration of existentialism and Marxism, without which it is not possible to consider a class as a historical and revolutionary factor neglecting the constituent elements of it. He insists that it is existentialism which can give Marxism the best way to understand every individual constituting a class (Chiari, 1975, p. 112). Ponty suggests a possible way towards a meaningful dialogue between Marxism and existentialism which is found to be followed by Sartre in his matured works to a considerable extent.

Sartre’s Marxist inclination becomes expressive in *Search for a Method* (1960) and the two volumes of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where Sartre discusses the ways in which existentialism tries to give Marxism a new direction through existential interpretation of historical situation. His aim at founding and re-vitalising Marxism with existentialism led him to explore deeper, primordial roots of Marxist concepts. To do this, Sartre, in his post War writings, puts existential critique to Marxist fold and as a  
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result a gradual shift is seen towards a historical conception of man in his later work which shows a deviation to the earlier position of *Being and Nothingness* that emphasises more on existential-ontological structures of man. This period has remained quite significant for Sartrean existential phenomenology, as after the War many of Sartre's formulations were said to be "almost literal translation of Marx" (Bree, 1972, p. 9). After the War experience, Sartre admits that there is a specific reality of social facts over and above the individuals. He says, "When I discovered the class struggle, this was a true discovery, in which I now believe totally, in the very form of description which Marx gave of" (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 39). He agrees with Marx in regard to the general schema of class struggle and holds that our history is determined by the forces of production and the production relation along with their correspondences and their conflict. In this phase Sartre even reformulates his most illustrative concept of consciousness and better expresses it as *le vécu*, translated as "lived experience"<sup>11</sup> (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 39).

With these new developments, Sartre presents the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* as a defence mechanism to the charge that existentialism is simply a variant of bourgeois individualism. In *Critique*, instead of isolating the individual in his abstract world of existential despair, Sartre, places him in historical situations which always includes others as well, in a dynamic relation and materialise the plurality of human projects<sup>12</sup> that organises historicity itself (Yovel, 1979, pp. 484-485). In this process, Sartre focuses on the relation between man and matter which he emphasised quite less in his earlier analyses. However, keeping intact the facticity-transcendence dialectic of the *pour-soi* and *en-soi* he moves into a materialistic explanation of human conscious development. Further, the "for-itself" or the transcending and negating consciousness, is interpreted in

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<sup>11</sup>Lived experience according to Sartre implies the whole of the dialectical process of psychic life, it is a process which remains incomprehensible to itself at any point since it is basically a process of constant totalization. It includes both conscious and unconscious states of experiences like forgetting, opacity, unself-consciousness and a lack of self-knowledge. Thus coming out of the Cartesian mode of consciousness endowed with self transparency, Sartre in the *Critique* considers consciousness in a transformed form as the pre-reflective comprehension of 'the translucidity of praxis to itself' (Fox, 2003, p. 24). It clarifies the stand of the for-itself, as the presence to itself and at the same time absent from itself.

<sup>12</sup>Project: The sum of one's actions (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007)

terms of need and *praxis*<sup>13</sup>, and facticity and “in-itself” in terms of practical-inertia or *practico-inert*. It is to be noted that *practico-inert* is not just the other name of the “being-in-itself”, but a broader interpretation that includes the material conditions in the form of socio-economic and political constraints that prevails in the practical historical situations. The whole range of material condition, along with the structure of man-- his social setting, public opinion, language etc. are what Sartre refers to as *practico-inert*. Literally it represents the practical constraints to *praxis*. Sartre also refers to it as “worked matter” and alienated *praxis* as well (Birt, 1986, p. 295). These material conditions are also called the historical facticity in the *Critique*.

This gives a newer flavour to Sartre’s theory of individuality where he considers the individual temporalisation in the collective historical process and rejuvenates the existential temporality with historical orientation. Human projects are now exercised in material condition. In his matured phase historical facticity and historical *praxis*, are promoted to ontological status as basic structures of the Being-of-man. While in the earlier writings he says that “the world is human”, in the later writings with historical interpretation he considers the world to be “historical” (Yovel, 1979, p. 487).

In this way, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* sets the existential floor for Marxism analysing the human reality in historical context, where he recognises man as an active participant in the making of history instead of identifying him as a “useless passion”. Though in *Being and Nothingness* Sartre defines man as a bodily consciousness in the form of “being-for-itself”, his analysis was more abstract. The *Critique* comes out of this abstract negativity and centres man in the making of history sharing existential conditions with the other existent beings in the materialistic modern world.

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<sup>13</sup>Though the term has a long history of use in the philosophical context from Aristotle to Kant and Hegel, yet in the present context its use by Marx is more relevant. Marx adopted this term in the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845-1846) to mean ‘sensuous human activity’ or a materialistic action involving change (Sartre J. P., *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume one, 1960/2004, p. xix). It signifies the idea of transforming the world through revolutionary activities. Reinterpreting the meaning of *praxis* Sartre uses it to imply a deeper structure of human activity which includes the ontological dimension along with the historical or materialistic factor. Sartre emphasises on the term *praxis* as a free, self conscious human activity in the materialistic environment. In the simplest way it can be understood as man’s action, both physical and mental in world situation amidst all complexities (Craib, 1976) (Blackburn, 2008).

Thus, it is seen that incorporating the concept of class struggle and human group behaviour Sartre has made a considerable modification in his themes of freedom and otherness and thereby in the interpretation of intersubjective relation as well. This subtle shift along with his recognition of collective action instead of rigid individuality strengthened by his agreement with Marx in the history of class struggle results in a parallel shift in his view on alienation from his earlier writings.

#### **4.3.1. Ontological Alienation: Sartre and Marx**

Sartre's view of a fluid subject that chooses all the time in different situations giving different shades to individual identity, leads him to take a different position on alienation than that of Marx. Negativity and alienation which was earlier explained in terms of layers of consciousness confronting other freedom, is now explained in terms of 'need' and *praxis*. The vulnerability and alienation which was experienced in *Being and Nothingness* at the 'look' of the Other, in *Critique*, this vulnerability of individual freedom is explained in terms of man's inextricable relation to matter in the form of human need. According to Sartre, the ultimate possibility of being alienated is inherent in the basic structure of man in relation to matter. The indispensable relation between the organic and the inorganic is set by human needs and necessities. Necessity itself expresses the very interlink between human freedom, matter and objectification and how freedom gets constrained in this process. Although Sartrean ideas share similarity with Marx's, yet what Sartre means by the role of *practico-inert* or worked matter in alienation is interesting. Sartre claims the relation between man and matter to be such that "man is 'mediated' by things to the same extent as things are 'mediated' by man" (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 79). What totalises man and matter and the entire material ensemble of the world is the factor of need. Though Marx also insists on these issues, these are more exemplifying in Sartre's theory because their treatment shows a considerable shift in Sartre's ideals even without losing the root.

According to Sartre, in order to fulfil need, man use to modify the nature, giving it a more materialistic mechanised form. In this process, human beings mostly produce something that escapes their control and affect man in a reverse way. The worked matter or the *practico-inert* reverberates back on men conditioning their freedom. For example, in order to operate machines for better production human beings have to perform with

the machines in the most mechanised and non-creative way which totally contradict our free *praxis* (Anderson, 1993). This way man makes himself an object in order to work on object; he makes himself inertia in order to overcome inertia, just as one converts one's hands and arms into tools in order to use tools. Thus, in order to satisfy needs, man makes himself an instrument by objectifying himself in action upon materiality. Hence, initially, man's ultimate possibility of being alienated or dehumanised is given in this first basic structure of his relationship to matter.

Such explanation of alienation by Sartre, considering man in terms of material needs, makes an obvious image that his existential phenomenology has merged into Marxism. But it can be marked as a hesitating conversion, as he emphasises more on the *apriori* nature of the problem of alienation. Marxism claims that the universal form of alienation does not necessarily imply that there is no overcoming possible. They argue that alienation should not be a reason for despair. Paradoxically it may instigate the oppressed class to develop and mature to negate the oppression within the capitalist mode of production. It is a dialectical process. If alienation is considered only as a reason for despair like the existentialists, then it would go against the basic dialectic of nature (Steiner, 1997). The fact is that once the worker becomes conscious of self-alienation, he no more let him be used as an instrument by the capitalists. The entire process reverses and the workers begin to think of his own development. Existentialism is criticised of being blind to this possibility of overcoming alienation as it considers alienation to be the essential condition of man.

Sartre, on the other hand argues that alienation is not limited to labour alone. Rather it covers other areas from the very birth- to the alienation experienced in different stages of life. Sartre's main theme is 'man' and hence he treats man and alienation in all phases of life. Overcoming of deprivation in certain societies, according to Sartre, is historically possible. But it is not possible to totally reduce it because of the ontological negativity intertwined in it. The prime concern of human life remains to live unalienated and free. While Marx considers revolution as the way to overcome oppression and alienation, Sartre hesitates to suggest any positive way out of alienation. According to Sartre, to overcome the drift of alienation indicates many more things like need for

survival, need for justice. These needs do not necessarily get satisfied in overcoming economic exploitation.

However, it is significant to note here that even Marx was not blind to the ontological aspects of human reality. Marx's radical superiority to his predecessors is evident in the dialectical historicity of his theory which he formulated as a combination of anthropology and ontology. He considers it to be the only way for producing a comprehensive and consistent history. As Mészáros notes,

In contrast to both the Hegelian abstractness and the Feuerbachian retrogression in historicity Marx discovered the dialectical relationship between materialistic ontology and anthropology, emphasising that men's feelings, passions etc. are not merely anthropological phenomena in the narrower sense, but truly ontological affirmation of essential being (of nature)....(Mészáros, 2006, p. 43)

Like Sartre, Marx also does not believe in a fixed human essence and hence he emphasises on the necessity of studying history through the dialectical relationship between ontology and anthropology so that it helps to understand the real historicity of man. Marx insists that a coherent historical theory always demands an ontological base. Citing Marx, Mészáros (2006) notes that in order to understand the universal underlying factor behind different forms and modes of alienation it is necessary to look into the "most comprehensive laws of a historical ontology founded on nature" (Mészáros, 2006, p. 44). Marx also, in a sense, believes that transcendence of alienation is not possible through the partial transformation of the political or the social factors involved in the process of alienation. Rather, it demands a radical transformation in the ontological structure as a whole.

However, the lacking in Marx is said to be his emphasis on social history without taking seriously into account the individual role in it. More than Marx, there is scope for a general existential and Sartrean dialogue with Hegelian notions of alienation and subjectivity. To some extent like the existentialists, the Hegelian free individual is able to reflect and to will one's role authentically. Otherwise there is alienation and inauthenticity. In Hegel's philosophy over and above its social dimension, there are

moments for choice, subjectivity and negative liberty of the subject that can lead to meaningful dialogue with existentialism.

Sartre incorporates the major ideas of both Hegel and Marx without compromising with his own style of analysis. Partially admitting the dialectical theory of Hegel, Sartre in a similar tone with Marx, holds that dialectic of man and nature is not inherent in the nature's dialectic but in human *praxis*. Need exemplifies the lack inherent in human *praxis*, which can be overcome by human interaction with the material things or the *practico-inert*. Need is an unavoidable link between the organic and inorganic world. The organised human reality is always directly or indirectly dependent on the material or inorganic world either in the form of oxygen or food (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 83). Applying the Marxian phrase of negation of negation Sartre holds that "need is the first factor of the negation of negation as it expresses itself as a lack within the organism; and need is a positivity in so far as the organic totality tends to preserve itself as such through it" (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 80). But preserving organic totality in terms of need is not that simplistic as resources are not sufficiently available in the material realm to provide everyone equally. In comparison to the human needs material resources are always found to be scarce. It is called the problem of scarcity, which stands as a vital cause of alienation and conflict in human relations.

Negative mediation, as Sartre indicates, may come from three possible factors— **material scarcity, the imposition of the Third party** and the **sense of fear**. Through these factors, Sartre analyses how alienation remains endemic in our shared *praxis* mediated by the *practico-inert*. In self formation, the fluid and free subject always finds constraints in the *practico-inert* and gets confronted with the Other. Here becomes prominent the need for justice, survival and meaningful life which necessarily lead to enduring violence in the quest for freedom out of alienation. However, among all these factors Sartre considers scarcity to be the very ground of alienation, human struggle and violence.

#### **4.3.2. Ontological Alienation in the Form of Negative Mediation of Scarcity**

Showing the significance of the mediation of matter in human relation and alienation Sartre emphasises more on *scarcity* than exploitation. Most of Sartre's later

works emphasise that all human affairs are conducted under conditions of relative scarcity for which men always confront each other as potential competitors. And this is what Sartre holds to be the structure of our socio-economic human history. He regards this relative scarcity as the prevalent condition of human alienation for all time which results in the problems of poverty and deprivation. According to Sartre, “But to say that our History is a history of men equivalent to saying that it is born and developed within the permanent framework of a field of tension produced by scarcity” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 125). Where Marx defines history in terms of the production system, Sartre defines it in terms of scarcity and considers scarcity as the “fundamental relation of our History” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 125). However, it is argued that scarcity in itself cannot occur without human intervention. It is rather *praxis* that works on matter and exaggerates scarcity. Hence, scarcity is rooted in the ontology of man. However it does not necessarily mean material scarcity.

According to Sartre, being the fundamental relation of our history, scarcity serves as the ontological negativity in human relation. Hence, he states that though it is possible to overcome historical alienation, ontological alienation always persists. Relative scarcity is so intrinsic to human existence today that overcoming this primitive alienating tendency is not possible though social institution or through the Marxian way. It is stated in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that the attempt to overcome the constraints of the *practico-inert* through social means itself leads to the fall of the social institutions into *practico-inert*.

Here we see that though Sartre talks about historical alienation; his emphasis is more on the deeper level of alienation, i.e. the alienation rooted in human existence itself. It is the “*apriori* possibility” of human *praxis* on which the historical alienation is found in concrete historical situation. The consequences of our actions and choices mostly end up escaping us. It goes beyond our capacity to anticipate. Even being a transcending being beyond all determinations, man cannot escape alienation or objectification that occurs as a structural passion. Man creates himself through the intermediary of his action in the world. That is what one can concede to the Marxists. But at the same time, humanity, being de-totalised totality, there is an internal theft of one’s work and the image that man has of himself is perpetually alienated.

#### 4.3.2.1. Scarcity and Violence

In the *Critique*, Sartre emphasises on violence “of freedom against freedom through the mediation of inorganic matter” (Santoni, 2003, p. 33). Concentrating on the role of scarcity in violence as depicted in Sartre’s *Critique*, Santoni notes, “if only two words were allowed to represent “violence” in the *Critique*, they would have to be “interiorized scarcity” (raretéintériorisée). The material conditions of scarcity become the core consideration here” (Santoni, 2003, p. 34). According to Sartre the root of alienation and constant struggle is nothing but scarcity. It is Scarcity that creates the environment for violence among men. It is a quantitative fact which implies that “there is not enough for everybody” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 128). The most specific structure of scarcity is identified as its capacity to unite men in the negative sense. “Scarcity marks the passive totality of individuals within a collectivity into an impossibility of coexistence” (Santoni, 2003, p. 34). It is claimed to be alternative version of Sartrean “hell” that was coined for every Other freedom in his earlier writings. It is ““Interiorised scarcity” which makes “everyone objectively dangerous to the Other” (Santoni, 2003, p. 38). In a scarce society opportunity for one may become the cause of deprivation for the other and hence may result in conflicting or violent human relation in the fight of getting one’s share. Sartre does not outright reject the possibility of human co-operation. But he argues that when there is constant mediation of materiality resulting in scarcity, then it becomes difficult to maintain positive reciprocity among individuals. Reciprocity becomes the relation of producing and preserving once being in the presence of the ‘Third’. In the material field it manifests the overpowering shade of otherness involved in it. In excitement of rearranging the material world for one’s own comfort everyone dominates the Other making him a means for realising the end and gets involved in struggle.

Caught in the milieu of scarcity man reveals his non-humanity and work as an alien species for his own species. In a scarce situation every other individual is seen as a constant danger for one’s existence, as a surplus member; as the Other, “designated by the material reality of the environment” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 130). In our constant relation to matter, scarcity reveals itself both as objective social structure and ontological structure, in which everyone appears to be both cause and victim of scarcity. In such an

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environment the relation of each individual to the Other becomes a relation of struggle and dominance as the Other reveals as the pure possibility of destroying one's necessities with his mere existence in the same environment. Thus unlike in pure reciprocity, in reciprocity modified by scarcity, every other individual, through very much same to me, confronts me as a threat to my existence. Though we still understand their ends and means being in the same dialectical structure, still in the milieu of scarcity, Sartre says,

we understand them as if they belonged to *an other species*, our demonic double. Nothing- not even wild beast or microbes – could be more terrifying for man than a species which is intelligent, carnivorous and cruel, and which can understand and outlit human intelligent, and whose aim is precisely the destruction of man. This however, is obviously our own species as perceived in others by each of its members in the context of scarcity. (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 132)

According to Sartre, the struggle of fulfilling needs amidst scarcity gives an experience of “Manichaeism action<sup>14</sup>” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 133) which insists that evil must be destroyed. Thus violence and counter-violence appears as the structure of human action where the target always remains to destroy the alien freedom threatening me to death in the practical field and where even I am also considered as a surplus man threatening his existence.

In other words, it is undeniable that what I attack is a man as man, that is, the free *praxis* of an organic being. It is man, and nothing else, that I hate in the enemy, that is in myself as Other; and it is myself that I try to destroy in him, so as to prevent him destroying me in my own body. (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 133)

Sartre considers scarcity as the pervasive theme for the interpretation of all human relation in history. It is the relation of man through the presence of other man in the *practico-inert*. Others also have same needs as mine. But he is still the Other as he carries the seed of threat of snatching my share. Centring needs man is threatened by

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<sup>14</sup>Menichaeism is a philosophical doctrine that implies that the world is not governed by one perfect Being, but by a balance of the forces of good and evil. It means a dualism in choosing a moral action, choosing between the good and the evil.

man and hence violence gets justified as counter-violence. The 'look' then gets expressed through a scarce situation. When 'look' gets realised in a group through conflict for the same matter- a new *praxis* is born called "war". According to Sartre, because of interiorised scarcity, man can kill others. Through the constant negative mediation of scarcity, Sartre tried to show that it is not the external material factor, but negativity in man, which acts as the root cause of violence (Kiernan, 1981). Analysing the negative role of scarcity, Sartre establishes that scarcity plays a very significant role in intervening human relationship. It is not necessary that human relationships always show the class conflict between two classes. The sense of negativity developed from scarcity may even appear within classes or group. This needs a more detail understanding of individual motives. Marx failed to realise this.

#### **4.3.2.2. Scarcity and Group Formation**

In terms of the destructive nature of scarcity Sartre also analyses the group behaviour, where in order to preserve freedom people get united and stand against the oppressing factor. However, even explaining group formation in a scarce society the mediation of negativity is more emphasised. According to Sartre, worked matter or the *practico-inert* all the time constrains our *praxis* and mediate our social and historical life in negative way. Against the dialectical movement of the *praxis*, worked matter mediate as anti-dialectic and affects positive reciprocal relations alienating the *praxis* by materially conditioning it and resulting in human relation into series, a collection of isolated individuals characterised by alterity or otherness.

However, it is not to be ignored that Sartre has referred to both shades of reciprocity, positive and negative, which he better exemplifies with the involvement of the 'Third'. Coming out of the conflicting binary relation of *Being and Nothingness*, *Critique* emphasises on the ternary relationship where the dyad gets united by the involvement of the 'Third' or the "Third Party" (Santoni, 2003, p. 36). And the crucial role played by the 'Third' conforms the priority of the triadic relationship over the dyad. The addition of the 'Third' in the triad implies that human life is basically collective than individualistic and that interpersonal experience can never precede group experience. The third party, as like scarcity plays both positive and negative role in uniting individuals. Hence, Sartre holds that "lived reciprocity always refers back to the third

party and in its turn shows that a ternary relation is both its foundation and its culmination” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 116). The Third appears as the totalising factor who can unite two individuals by dragging them towards his own end, either by observing or commanding them to act in his determined way. This kind of pre-establishes imperative structure of the world can be said to be starting point of social group which gets expressed through the objectification of the individual subjectivities turning into intersubjective reality. In this way “...duality is unified from outside through the *praxis* of the third party...” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 119). But such unity is imposed on the dyad from outside; they receive it passively without realising from inside. Though the Third party unite the dyad in a reciprocal relation, in return it gets involved in a negative way to the collective unity. Hence, the relation according to Sartre between the dyad and the third is always unreciprocal. Sartre argues,

The unity of a dyad can be realised only within a totalization performed from outside by a third party. Each member of the team comes upon this unity as a negation,...the total reality of the collective undertaking can only exist elsewhere, through the mediation of an Other and as a non-reciprocal object. (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 115)

The constant presence of the ‘Third’ is found even in a group, where each member of the group taking the position of the ‘Third’ can mediate and control other’s *praxis*. Emphasising on the significance of negative mediation Sartre points towards the possible unity of individuals when unlike the series the individuals get united to defend against a threat that comes from outside. This is what called the fused group or group-in-fusion (*groupe-en-fusion*)(Fox, 2003, p. 64). This unity no more endures the situation, but tries to defend or control it. Hence, it is *praxis*, as a defence mechanism, which unites the individuals into a fused group. Realising some threat from outside or the Third a group of individuals spontaneously join with each other and build up their unity in positive reciprocity. However, there is no specific structure or organisation of a fused group and the individuals united in this form does not completely surrender their freedom to the common goal. It is to be noted that the fused group is not a created totality but a free constitution of individual *praxis* into common *praxis* emerged against an external threat to survival. The most possible outcome from such united *praxis* is

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“free violence of man against misery and impossibility of living” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 405). Hence, it not only signifies violence against the violent enemy but against necessity or material possibilities that may occur as a threat to individual sovereignty. In this sense even through the external threat disappears the possibility of violence always remains vital inside the group as everyone in the group cares for own sovereignty. In such situation the fused group may any time return to seriality or isolated individuality (Stigliano, 1983, p. 60).

But the violence to necessity is never ending. Further the enemy which has withdrawn now, may attack at any moment in the future. Hence the group demands an organised structure in order to stand united against the dominating ‘Third’. In such common structure freedom no more remains an individual effort but a common *praxis* and it “grounds the permanence of the group by producing its own inertia through itself and in mediated reciprocity, this new statute is called *the pledge (le serment)*”(Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 419). The *pledged-group* is an organised structure to which my individual freedom is sacrificed. Once pledged into this structure is to give consent to the primacy of Other’s freedom over *mine*; to accept the untranscendability of *myself* which confirms the right of the group over my *praxis*. In a sense, I consent the group the power of taking my life if I do not abide by the given direction. This can in a sense be said to be the substitution of the fear of all for the fear of oneself through everyone. With these examples Sartre claims that terror and violence is all the time experienced even within group. According to Sartre, terror or violence is the basis of the group fraternity. He holds, “...fraternity is *the right of all* through everyone and over everyone. It is not enough to recall that it is also violence, or that it originated in violence: it is violence itself affirming itself as a bond of immanence through positive reciprocities”(Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 438). Further, Sartre says, “fraternity is the most immediate and constant form of Terror” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 440). Thus, with the example of different stages of human unity, individual and group, Sartre shows violence or fear to be the source behind fraternity. In a sense he identifies violence with fraternity. In support of Sartre’s explanation Stigliano (1983) argues,

Clearly however, part of Sartre’s analysis includes the awareness of the pathos of the violent actor. We are all urged forward into some

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collectivity by a threat to our survival. Sartre's analysis is powerful because he locates the violent actor within the context of everyday struggle without sentimentalizing him or ascribing "revolutionary virtues to him. (p. 83)

Violence, according to Sartre, cannot be understood to be a peripheral response. It is rather pervasive, as it characterises the process through which individuals spontaneously organise themselves in the face of scarcity or threat.

Sartre's concept of alienation, thus, introduces a deeper comprehension of social misery into the Marxist theory in his attempt to make intelligible all the forms through which *praxis* becomes lost and opposed to its creations. That way, Sartre goes beyond conceiving of alienation simply as a specific historical consequence of the capitalist mode of production. For Sartre, alienation is a phenomenon that permeates the entirety of one's being with others in so far as we share a common *practico-inert* reality. "... Thus, in opposition to Marx's somewhat eschatological pronouncements concerning the end of forms of alienation under communism, Sartre questions whether the disappearance of the Capitalist forms of alienation must be identified with the suppression of all forms of alienation"(Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 307).

#### **4.3.2.3. Negligence of Scarcity in Marx**

Carrying on the significance of scarcity and violence, in analysing alienation and conflicting human relations, Sartre points out that Marxism does not consider scarcity as fundamental, in the formation and reformation of human groups trying to overcome scarcity. He significantly states that though Marx and Engels give a historical account of the formation of social relations and society, they fail to give account of the individuals, who, even directly co-operating around a mode of production and transforming into a group as like the Rousseauan contract, becomes antagonistic at a certain stage of time (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 146). Sartre questions, why should the social division of labour, which is a positive differentiation, be transformed into class struggle, that is, into a *negative* differentiation? Marx considered the proletariat society as the solution to the problem of the capitalist oppression. Then what counts for the facts where within the working class there appears a more powerful section taking a bureaucratic position and

accumulating more facilities? This shows that differentiation may occur within the exploited group itself. The reason for this, according to Sartre, cannot be found in history. Rather the reason is interiorised negation in a particular scarce environment. Sartre explains this situation to be the practical dimension of non-humanity in the man of scarcity, which is not focussed in the Marxist explanation. Sartre notes,

Marx explained the material conditions for the appearance of *capital*, a social force which ultimately imposes itself on individuals as anti-social. But our concern is to carry out a concrete investigation of the general, dialectical conditions which produce a determinate inversion in the relations of man and matter as a moment of the overall process; and which produce, within that determinate moment, through the *praxis* of Others, and through his own *praxis* as Other, the domination of man by matter (by *this* particular already worked-matter) and the domination of matter by man. It is within this complex dialectical relation that the possibility of the capitalist process continues itself as one of the possible historical moments of alienation.(Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 152)

The basic point where Sartre differs from Marx and Engels, is his emphasis on negativity, which neither Marx nor Engels considered as significant (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 148). Sartre holds that the error of the classical economists like Marx and Engels lies in their belief in human nature. Sartre argues that positive explanation is easier since it attempts to reduce the complexity of situation. But a detail dialectical investigation of history proves that conflicts have never existed without the non-human reverse action of man that attempts at destroying the Other(Sartre J. P., 1985/2006, p. 12). Sartre suggests,

At the time of studying the intelligibility of struggles, it is as well to recall that at all events struggles are never and no where accidents of human history. They precisely present the manner in which man live scarcity in their perpetual movement to transcend it. Or, if you prefer, struggle is scarcity as a relationship of men with one another.(Sartre J. P., 1985/2006, pp. 13-14)

With this ground their belief is that man is what he is at the outset and scarcity conditions him only externally. However, Sartre in a footnote clarifies that his attempt is neither to question nor to complete the Marxist theory. Rather, it is an attempt to focus on negativity as the implicit motive force of the historical dialectic (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 153 footnote).

#### **4.4. Relation between Sartre and Communism: Sartre as an Advocate of Freedom and Negation:**

Sartre's inclination towards Marxism enticed a common understanding that Sartre has surrendered his freedom to communism. Following this there is always a controversy and this relationship has never been clear. Though, in the mid 1940's, the Marxists attacked Sartre as a bourgeois, the period from early 1950's shows a kind of rapprochement between them. In the year 1952, criticising the authority's unjustified action on Jacques Duclos, a member of the French Communist Party (PCF), Sartre wrote "...An anticommunist is a rat...in the name of liberty, equality, fraternity, I swore to the bourgeoisie a hatred that would die only with me" (as cited in Morris, 2008, p. 15).

However, the most important fact is that Sartre is primarily an advocate of freedom and negativity, who writes to resist against all forms of domination or determination. As Delacampagne notes, his writings were like "hymns to liberty" (Delacampagne, 1999, p. 194). Even being tagged as a bourgeoisie, Sartre, being a defender of freedom, always stood by the oppressed section. His turn towards the communist is also such a concern for the oppressed, as during that period he found the communists being unnecessarily victimised by the French police. But he was neither a Stalinist, nor he joined the communist party in the true sense, though he wholeheartedly appreciated the communist agenda and functions. Sartre's philosophy is a philosophy of freedom and negation in situation. The same gets exercised in his support for communism. He supported communism because he denied the American imperialism. But, this is a situational negation, a free choice against situation, not a fixed identity (Welten, n.d).

Sartre's support for the communists could not deter him from his motto of freedom. Out of his love for freedom, after the Second World War, he passionately got

involved in the defence of the oppressed section to show them the rout of freedom and hence supported communism. However, his relation with the communist had never been comfortable one. For his situational support toward the mottos of French Communism he had to lose his long companions Raymond Aron, Merleau Ponty and Albert Camus in different phases of development. Sartre supported communism even in its Stalinist turn when North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950 (Delacampagne, 1999). This unexpected turn of Sartre separated him from his long companion Merleau Ponty who refused to support the communist party for such activities and hence, Sartre as well.

However, Sartre's attraction towards communism did not last long. He found the same American Imperialist attitude within communism in the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary. He condemned this turn as violence against socialism and wrote against the French Communist Party in his article "The Ghost of Stalin" (1956-57). According to Sartre imagination can best express the ontological freedom and the presence to the self and nothingness is also best exhibited through it. Sartre accuses the communists in the later phase of neglecting freedom in a sense by neglecting the power of imagination (Flynn, 1979, p. 163). He interprets his involvement with the communist as an activity of making own hands dirty, as he says that "one cannot do politics without dirtying own hands" (as cited in Flynn, 1979, p. 164). Sartre's journey with communism can be clearly understood from the following quote:

The history of Sartre's relation with the Communists can be summarised in five essays whose titles chart the parabola: "Materialism and Revolution" (1946), which considers true revolutionary thinking impossible from the standpoint of dialectical materialism; "The Communists and Peace" (1952-54), the high point in Sartre's support of the party; "The Ghost of Stalin" (1956-57), confirming Sartre's rejection of Stalinism and expressing his revulsion at the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt; and finally "The Communists are Afraid of Revolution" (1968) and "The Socialism that Came in from the Cold" (1970), voicing respectively his reaction to the party's restraint during the events of May 1968 and to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia that same year. By the end of the '60s Sartre has come to regard the French party as amoral,

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authoritarian, and gradualist. He has cast his lot with Les Maos and others who share his ethical and libertarian vision. (Flynn, 1979, p. 164)

#### **4.5. Difference between Sartre's Existential Phenomenology and Marxism (Sartre's Criticism of Marxism)**

The *Critique* highlights that while Sartre and Marx share similar view regarding the definition of history in terms of human *praxis*, they differ in regard to their concern over the individuality and collective identity. Sartre criticises Marx on two fundamental points. Firstly, Marx emphasising more on universal historical facts overlooks the particular facts or the individual being. Secondly, Marx ignores the fact that besides historical image there is some deep level of human reality that pre-conditions social and historical facts in man, that is negativity.

Where Sartre, even focussing on collective *praxis* in a needful society essentially comes back to emphasise on the individual, Marx shows his sole concern for the social *praxis* and regards history as the fact concerning the class relation playing different roles in the production system. In simplistic terminology Marx's approach can be said to be objective and Sartre's subjective, keeping the track of phenomenology intact (Delacampagne, 1999). Sartre suggests Marxism to maintain a progressive-regressive<sup>15</sup> method by taking seriously the factor of individuality in historicity. Through his new interests in writing biographies Sartre shows that it is not necessary to behave in a determined structure only. Through *The Family Idiot*, the biography on Flaubert and through his autobiography *The Words* he shows that past can be given a new sense if regressed back to it with a progressive hint. Through such writings Sartre attempts at demonstrating that instead of subsuming particular individual lives under the historical universe, it is necessary to discover the different ways in which individual freedom gets expressed through the historical generalities or universalities.

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<sup>15</sup>Sartre considers it to be the proper framework of understanding man. The regressive method attempts at reaching the abstract praxis of the individual which ultimately leads him to History through his engagement with relationship with the inorganic matter and other individual as well. The totalization of it in the concrete field is called the progressive movement. The primary concern of this method suggested by Sartre is to emphasise on the significance of the free individual choice in the social context (Craib, 1976, pp. 100-101)(Barbet). Sartre's study of Flaubert is said to be a study applying progressive-regressive method attempting to understand a man the best way possible.

Hence, even within a fused-group and a pledged-group the recurrence of individual freedom is quite vibrant. Such interpretation emphasises on the fact that the historical conditions cannot fully operate and determine individual life. However, Sartre never denies the importance of historical universalities in shaping one's personal choice and identity; what he denies is the engulfment of particular facts by historical universals. Reinterpreting the relation between individual and history he argues the relation to be such that "I shape history by shaping myself and shape myself by shaping history" without getting merged in one another (Yovel, 1979, pp. 495-96).

Further, the Marxist particularly concentrates on the adult man involved in the production relation. Assuming the social man only in the adult stage is nothing but totally ignoring the significant stages of development in which one starts the journey amidst the socio-historical facts. Sartre denies this status and concentrates on the complete man starting from his early childhood stages upto the grown up man. He claims that it is necessary for Marxism to regress back to the individual and concentrate on the role of the individual consciousness and activities in shaping and sustaining the social totality or class consciousness. For this he suggested the application of progressive-regressive method to Marxism in order to grasp the concrete living experiences of man. Sartre emphasises on the lifelong experiences of a man in analysing the factors of alienation. Referring to the example of the workers he argues that life of a worker does not remain confined to the workplace only. Rather in shaping his identity as a worker, as a member of an oppressed proletariat, he comes across many other social contexts and mediations which lead him to the consciousness of a worker. In this context Fox (2003) quotes Sartre,

the worker was not born and does not live the entire life in the work place, but lives in the context of a family, residential group, community and nation. Many of their basic projects are shaped accordingly through the influence of family, ethnic tradition and community before they even enter the work place. ... If Marxism contents itself with the sole perspective of production it will fail "to find mediations which allow individual concrete --the particular life --to emerge from the *general*

contradictions of productive forces and relations of production. (as cited in Fox, 2003, p. 70)

According to Sartre, the understanding of the socio-historical man must start from the individual as a “singular universal”, which, in Sartre’s world which constitutes the universal history (Yovel, 1979, p. 497).

Thus, showing the lacks in Marxism Sartre emphasises on the need of combining existential psychoanalysis with Marxism for providing the foundation for the Marxian historical concepts to be applied. According to Sartre, psychoanalysis correctly coupled and rationalised with Marxism can be useful in order to analyse men as a whole (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008). The existential psychoanalysis of man serves as a bridge between the individual and the socioeconomic situation of history and tries to do justice to both the identities of the individual. In an interview to the *New Left Review* in 1969, Sartre clarifies that the primary concern of his philosophy is to “demonstrate the encounter between the development of the person, as psychoanalysis has shown it to us and the development of history” (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 44). Hence, both psychoanalysis and Marxism are equally important in his methodology.

Substantiating Sartre, Lichtheim (1963) argues that Marxism has come to a stop for neglecting the individual manifold. Hence, in order to revive the actual intension of Marxism with existential input existentialism revived in this juncture reaffirming the reality of man. Marxism treats personalities and events abstractly, subordinating them to a preconceived schematisation. One of the major roots of the failure of contemporary Marxism that Sartre cites is their reluctance to take the issue of mediation seriously. Contrary to the common understanding of Marxism as a practical idea, Sartre holds that Marxism, towards its later period has remained merely an absolute knowledge that “no longer knows anything”. Sartre did not hesitate to call it “the terrorist practice of liquidating the particularity” (Sartre J. P., 1960/1963, p. 28). Instead of this loose position of Marxism existentialism reasserts itself reaffirming the reality of man. Sartre claims that “Existentialism and Marxism...aim at the same object; but Marxism has reabsorbed man into the idea, and existentialism seeks him everywhere *where he is*, at his work, in his home, in the street” (Sartre J. P., 1960/1963, p. 28).

#### 4.6. Existential Marxism: Sartre's New Orientation

Sartre's later works are to facilitate Marxism to become more comprehensive and open by providing with some basic issues which Marxism was lacking hitherto. As Raymond Aron (1969) says the shift in Sartre's philosophy from ontological to ontic and his inclination towards Marxism does not imply Sartre's complete adoption of Marxism surrendering his own philosophy. Sartre's involvement with Marxism was no way of a party member as he has never joined the communist party. Through his thorough investigation of historicity and dialectic in the *Critique*, Sartre tries to provide the basis for Marxism what it failed to generate for itself. It is more specifically a kind of softening the Stalinist rigidity found in Marxism (Craib, 1976, p. 97).

In the *Critiques* Sartre clarifies that though he considers Marxism as the ultimate philosophy of his age, he never approves of contemporary Marxism and criticises it for becoming more political ignoring the philosophical dimension and thus, of lacking the capacity to relate the individual to the social whole. Sartre's matured writing on the individual as a social being is claimed to be a synthesis of philosophy and sociology and hence a step beyond contemporary Marxism (Lichtheim, 1963, p. 224). Since Sartrean Marxism is a synthesis of Hegel, Marx and also of Heidegger, it sought to restore the lost philosophical life of Marxism with a dialogue with existentialism. It was his attempt to disclose a proper understanding of Marxian notion of *praxis* and of history by placing man in concrete historical situation so that history be illuminated and man be reconquered inside Marxism (Lichtheim, 1963, p. 228). In Hegel too, in the development of individuality there must be moment of separation of subject and object, a subjective and a negative moment so that the reflecting self becomes self conscious. Reason thus overcomes alienation. But in Marxism, social change alone will change the self.

But, for Sartre, meaning of history can never be approached by this rout. It must be discovered in historical process itself, via man's activity, his *praxis*. The material antinomies of Being and Consciousness which comes to light after the collapse of Hegelian synthesis collapsed, must be overcome through an effort to lay bare the ontological structure of historical reality. And this is how he seeks to place Marx in relation to Hegel against the orthodox brand of Marxism. More than orthodox Marxism,

Sartrean approach to dialectical reason is the understanding that permits one to grasp the process of history, that Sartre invokes directing against orthodox Marxism.

#### 4.7. Conclusion

The chapter started with two basic objectives -

First, to examine whether Sartre merges his phenomenological existentialism into Marxism by surrendering to the Historical Materialism of Marx and secondly, if not, what sort of new orientation does Sartre give to Marxism?

In the detail discussion of the chapter we find a negative answer to the first question and positive to the second. It is seen that though Sartre, with Marxist interpretations modifies his earlier philosophy giving a social direction to the radical freedom of the isolated individual in the *Search for a Method* and the two volumes of the *Critique*, his primary focus always remains the existential issues experienced by the individual in a social milieu. The chapter argues that even using the same platform of Marx in the form of matter, need and *negation of negation*, Sartre keeps his ontological explanation undeterred and emphasises on the lacking in Marxist explanation of historical events where human concern seems to lack over historical.

Sartre's emphasis on the negative mediation analysed in different stages of human life deters him from giving a solution to the problem of alienation. Coming out of the sense of alienation explained in his earlier writings, in the later phase he seems to give the connotations of the 'look' or the Other, to the material scarcity realised in the shared social environment. The constant negative mediation in the form of scarcity, according to Sartre, is the original cause behind human struggle and conflict as scarcity indicated that there is not enough for everyone and even then human *praxis* basically runs through the attempt to satisfy one's own need to the best level possible. Hence, in the struggle of getting one's own share man can even kill others and violence and counter-violence thus gets justified in a society engulfed by scarcity. Though it is possible to overcome alienation in the Marxist explanation, Sartre denies its possibility in a scarce society where everyone is seen as the Other encroaching my share of need and

thus alienating me from my freedom. Alienation rather gets more engraved and shows its face in constant negation of other's existence through violent means.

Thus, the detail analysis of Sartre's concept of freedom and alienation in his Marxist phase reflects that though the conflicting human relationship expressed through two conflicting individuals of *Being and Nothingness* gets relaxed in the social context expressed through Sartre's Marxist inclination in the *Critiques*, it does not lead to a positive picture altogether. The constant negative mediation though unites two individuals, yet this unity is also realised against the Third, in fear or terror of losing one's meaning and crisis of survival. The recourse is again found in conflict and enduring violence. Standing for the oppressed section of the society, thus, Sartre is found to endorse violence to a great extent as a way out of oppression. As noted, "Sartre...was willing to justify revolutionary Terror under certain conditions, given what he regarded as the revolutionary "end" of making a "new humanity"" (Santoni, 2003, p. 164). In this phase Sartre gets criticised by his close friend Albert Camus. Camus criticises Sartre for identifying violence with fraternity and suggests to put some limit to violence. Here appears the necessity of finding out an alternative way in Sartre philosophy out of such conflicting and violent human relationship. Even Sartre also wanted to avoid it and hence, towards the last phase of life he emphasises on the ethical dimension of human relationship. This leads to the next chapter where an attempt is made to understand the ethical dimension of Sartre's philosophy in a comparative discussion with Emmanuel Levinas.

## CHAPTER-V

### HUMANISM OF THE OTHER: SARTRE AND LEVINAS

#### 5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter it is understood that in order to restore freedom (either group or individual) against oppressive tendencies (the Other), Sartre considers violent resistance as a necessary phenomenon. Further, he claims fear and violence as the basic uniting factors behind human group formation and in maintaining unity within. And this is what he terms to be the essence of fraternity. For this point Sartre gets strongly criticised by Albert Camus, of endorsing unlimited violence and distorting the meaning of fraternity. Camus suggests Sartre to put some limit to violence and not to equate it with fraternity. The attempt of this chapter is to find out a reply to these criticisms and see whether Sartre continues his views on violence in the same manner or modifies them with any ethical input on human relation which he promises to explore in his earlier philosophy itself.

For endorsing violence against oppression in his political phase of engagement Sartre got intensely criticised in the academic circle of France. However, it is to be noted that Sartre was not blind to the ethical shades of human reality, which is primarily portrayed in negative way in the earlier dramas and other writings. Even in these individualistic writings he left subtle references to the ethical base of individual choice with some universal import. Concentrating on Sartrean key themes like freedom, alterity, praxis etc. Anderson (1993) effectively brings out the ethical tone hidden in the individualistic philosophy of Sartre. He argues that though Sartre could not fulfil his ethical implications in *Being and Nothingness*, he makes significant attempts to maintain it in his later writings. In the post War writings, Sartre presents the Other not as an overpowering subject arresting ones freedom but as a fellow being encouraging and helping to fulfil our projects and thus heading towards an ethical community.

Taking these facts into consideration this chapter aims at exploring the ethical outlook of Sartrean philosophy in individuality and in the newer interpretation of Otherness in his later philosophy. Further it takes note of the philosophy of Levinas, with his ethics of the Other in order to strengthen the understanding of Sartre's ethical stand.

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Though Sartre always promised for a complete book on ethics, he could never fulfil the task in his life time through his writing except from giving some short outlines. Some hints of his ethical orientation are prominent in *Being and Nothingness* (1943), *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), the *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1983) and the *1945 October* and *1964 Rome Lectures* where he expresses the significance of community life over and above the individual. Of late it is found that Sartre's expectation to provide a complete written ethical note finds direction to certain extent in the 1980 *Hope Now* interviews with Benny Lévy.

However, the authenticity of *Hope Now* has always remained debated. Since it presents a completely reverse picture of Sartrean ideas expressed in the *Critiques*, critics considers it to be Lévy's imposition on Sartre. To quote from Ronald Arason's introduction to *Hope Now*, "According to Simone De Beauvoir, these are not really Sartre's own words at all but have been placed in his mouth by the domineering and self-interested Lévy ...."(as cited in Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 4). Nevertheless, reply to these criticisms, as incorporated in the book form of the interview, also bears significance for considering it for a matured understanding of Sartrean humanism. Hence, even after the claim of *Hope Now's* being not authentic but manipulated by Lévy, here, as like Santoni (2003), this interview is considered to be worth mentioning especially when we carry over Sartre's ethical comments over and above the radical views on violence and fraternity.

However, before focussing on the ethical note of *Hope Now*, a brief review of Sartre's previous ethical views are to be considered. Being fundamentally humanistic theory the different phases of Sartre's philosophical interpretation of human reality is closely connected with his ethical notes. Any development in the theories concerning human existence leads to some progression in his ethical treatments. Throughout the evolution of his thought, till the end, Sartre himself stated that he had worked on a number of different ethics, three being prominent.

## 5.2. Three layer of Ethics in Sartre's Philosophy

Sartre's ethical views can be understood in three phases, which are classified as his first, second and third ethics. As stated in the *Notebooks*, the first ethics means that initiated in *Being and Nothingness (1943)* and explained thoroughly in *Notebooks for an Ethics (1983)*, which he later approves to be abstract, being dependent on the pre-reflective and reflective cogito and devoid of any concern towards the external circumstances (Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. xvi). Sartre's second ethics gets expressed through the two volumes of the *Critique* where freedom is set within the framework of society and social and political commitment is given priority over and above individuality (Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. xvi). The ethical points finally expressed in his *Hope Now interviews* are said to be his third ethics based on the issue of human fraternity and brotherhood which may also be realised without facing violence.

Sartre's motto of freedom in situation and negation give a continuously changing and maturing image to his philosophy. Pertaining to this his views on ethics also changes in important ways during his lifetime parallel with his changing understanding of the nature of human reality in relation to the world. Historical circumstances have also remained equally important factors affecting the modifications and reformulations of his ontological views. Hence, with the matured understanding of the role of historical circumstances in human intersubjective engagement Sartre's ethical formulations also take newer shapes. Towards the end of his life, regarding the 'third ethics' Sartre himself stated that the third ethics he was then engaged in did not involve a wholesale rejection of his early moral thought but was rather a "return to" and "enrichment" of it. Accordingly, Sartre's second and third ethics inevitably includes the first, transformed and amplified (Anderson, 1993). The three phases are discussed elaborately in the following

1. **First ethics:** Written in the mid and later forties and the one promised at the end of *Being and Nothingness (1943)*, Sartre's first ethics is primarily based on his ontology. This refers to the abstract idealistic ethics, mainly discussed in *Being and Nothingness*, *Notebooks for an Ethics (1983)* and *Existentialism is a Humanism (1946)*. Anderson considers the six hundred pages of the unfinished *Notebooks for an Ethics* to be the most comprehensive source to discover the
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character of Sartre's first ethics. In the *Notebooks*, besides defining man as freedom and consciousness Sartre gives equal importance to body and facticity as constituting factors of human reality. As Anderson notes, "*Notebooks* presents human being not as a pure consciousness but as one immersed, "invested," in facticity and concretely situated in the world" (Anderson, 1993, p. 44). However, Sartre could not give it a complete form in his lifetime and it remained unfinished.

2. **Second ethics:** In Sartre's post War writings side by side the historical dialectic, the issue of morality is also taken into consideration, though not explicitly explained always. Sartre's second ethics is basically realistic and materialistic in its features. It dates from the mid-sixties, from *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), but remains unfinished. Apart from the *Critique* it is elaborated in the unpublished *Rome Lecture* (1964) and *The Family Idiot* (1982). Sartre's second ethics is to a great extent grounded on the concepts of the *Critique*. The phenomenological floor set in *Being and Nothingness*, emphasising on the inevitable relation between "in-itself" and "for-itself" in real situational frame, is exercised in the *Critique* in a materialistic platform through the perspective of *practico-inert* and *praxis*. Here, apart from the negative mediation, he tries to point out the probable positive role of the *practico-inert* in uniting man. It is particularly a realistic and materialistic morality. As Anderson (1993) notes, in the *Critique* Sartre insists "on the need for people to work cooperatively with others in pledged groups in order to obtain more freedom for all is an extension of the notion of interdependency that was central to the social dimension of the first ethics" (Anderson, p. 102). However, more than focussing on positive relation the analysis in the *Critique* remained more on the negative side of human relation where unity is said to be realised only against some external threat. An effective platform for humanism remained incomplete in these volumes.
3. **Third Ethics (Power and Freedom):** Sartre's awaited third morality started in mid seventies, but left only tape recorded. It could not be written out due to Sartre's blindness in the last years of his life. His third phase of moral argumentation which he expected to publish with the title *Power and Freedom*,

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thus, remained unwritten. Sartre repudiated the idealism of his early ontology and developed more realistic, historically grounded ethical theory in the following decades. Santoni notes that “the spirit of what Sartre says about violence in his final 1980 interviews is more akin to his mood and thinking in the *Notebooks* than his approach to it in the *Critique* and the *Preface*” (Santoni, 2003, p. 83).

### 5.3. Sartre’s Ethics as a Whole

Defining Sartre’s ethics Anderson quotes, “...In the concluding pages of *The Transcendence*: Sartre writes “ethics finds its bases in reality.... This ethics, he explains, will not try to escape from the world by seeking some “inner life” or self within consciousness, for there is no such life or self. It will turn its attention to “real problems” of men in the world”” (as cited in Anderson, 1993, p. 6). Sartre emphasises on morality’s being inessential and subjective which can effectively form objective platform for values. Denouncing universal moral principles Sartre holds that the universal ideals lack its meaning in an individual life, and hence, in order to exercise an ethical life one must be ethical from within one’s desire, not from outside. Discarding reflection in moral life he holds that “the one and only basis of moral life must be spontaneity, that is the immediate and unreflective” (Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. 5).

Sartre’s ethical outlook is primarily based on three premises that are emphasised in *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and the *October Lecture of 1945* entitled *Existentialism is a Humanism*.

- A. The first one is that freedom is the primary characteristic of human existence.
- B. Secondly, pertaining to the indifference towards the concept of God it is maintained that there is no *apriori* values serving as the basis of judgement for any human action. Sartre’s ethics is framed against the possibility of the existence of God or any other higher authority or principle. Since God has no role in founding basic moral values for man, values are ultimately dependent on free individual choice. Impressed by Dostoevsky’s phrase “If God is dead, everything is permitted”, Sartre says

when God dies and the saint is no more than an egoist, then what difference does it make that he has a beautiful soul, that he is beautiful, if only to himself? At this moment, the maxim “act ethically in order to be moral” becomes poisoned. The same thing applies to “act ethically in order to act ethically.” Morality has to transcend itself towards an end that is not itself. Give someone who is thirsty something to drink not in order to give him something in order to be good but in order to overcome his thirst. Morality suppresses itself in positing itself, it posits itself in suppressing itself. It must be a choice of the world, not of a self.(Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. 3).

Moral values are such that it makes one to choose among many choices of action, instead being limited to just one. Sartre insists that moral values cannot be reduced to a single fundamental theory as like Aristotle’s ethics, Kantian Categorical imperative or the utilitarian suggestion. Sartre insists on concentrating on everyday ethics more than the ethical principle of any system. Reality may present different situations before us among which we need to choose one. Hence, ultimately choice is the best option left without the guidance of any of the moral theories. Hence freedom in this sense becomes self-evidently valuable. Nevertheless, choosing one’s own take does not imply that morality is entirely subjective without any objective impact. Rather it suggests the third premise that

- C. Individual freedom is always claimed to be necessarily linked with the freedom of the Other, “indeed, I am not free unless others are as well” (Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. xi).

A common confusion appears regarding the scope of any possibility of passing moral judgement on other’s action in the normless platform where every individual decides on the morality of an act on the basis of freedom. The worry is that Sartrean ethics is not capable of judging some action as immoral, and hence there remains hardly any scope to judge actions as right or wrong. A reply to these confusions is found in

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Sartrean interpretation which argues that though we cannot pass moral judgement on other's work we can definitely pass rational judgement in the form of truth or falsity of actions. According to Sartre, if considered from the point of view of the "for-itself" it is not possible for an action to be immoral, because Sartre holds, "We can never choose evil. We always choose the good" (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 37). Hence, giving significance to the role of the Other in judging, Sartre Says, "So if there are bad acts, in the sense of morally bad acts, the problem of others must play a role. My act is always good until someone else says otherwise. "Being-for-itself", apart from "being-for-others", does not necessarily include ethics; it is merely one of its conditions of possibility" (Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. xi).

In Sartre's early ethics freedom is considered to be the sole source of value. But, in his later writings and interviews he tries to rectify it in connection with the reciprocity of the Other. In this matured phase consciousness no more remains in solitude, but engendered by the presence of another at each moment. In Sartre's words,

to put it differently, each consciousness seems to me now simultaneously to constitute itself as a consciousness and at the same time as the consciousness of the Other and for the Other. It is this reality—the self considering itself as self for the Other, having a relationship with the Other—that I call ethical conscience.(Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 71)

Considering the possible between the self and the Other, In *Existentialism and Humanism* and *Notebooks for an Ethics*, Sartre talks about the universal characters of moral values which signifies the universal concern of every individual choice. For example, Anderson (1993), says, "when I experience something (justice, for example,) to be a moral value or good, I experience it to be not just a value for me but also a value for others" (Anderson, 1993, p. 154).

We will freedom for freedom's sake through our individual circumstances. And thus willing freedom we discover that it depends entirely on the freedom of other, and that the freedom of others depends on our own. Of course freedom as the definition of man does not depend on others, but as soon as there is commitment, I am obliged to will the

freedom of others at the same time I will my own. I cannot set my own freedom as a goal without also setting the freedom of others as a goal. (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, pp. 48-49)

Further, certain norms, to which Sartre grants a universal character, are- norms that are grounded in the needs of human being as members of the human species, as the need for protein, oxygen or the need of love and affection. These needs are based both on biological and social human reality. The norms which are rooted in human needs like love, communication and knowledge, are considered to be universal and objective norms as these are valuable for humanity as a whole. Through these interpretations in the *Notebooks* and the *1945 October Lecture* Sartre sets a moral platform for human reality in the broader sense, which is not found in *Being and Nothingness*.

With these modifications in the attitude of human reality as a whole, Sartre gives a totally reformulated view on the concept of fraternity in his *Hope Now interviews* as a measure against the Marxist concepts. The purpose of the *Hope Now interviews*, as stated by Sartre, is “both to sketch out an ethics and to find a true guiding principle for the left” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 24). Sartre recognises this interview as the foundation of his third and final ethics, the idea of which “has eluded him for over thirty years” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 24). The failure of “working towards society” and the “spirit of consciousness” led Sartre to ponder over the possibility of hope for an ethical society and these results in the *Hope Now interviews*. Here Sartre points towards “fraternity, dependence, solidarity, sociality, and working towards society as the basis for a new ethics of reciprocity and the “guiding principle for the left” to be constructed from it”(Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 25). Initiated with a hint on ethical implication in *Being and Nothingness*, reformulated in *Notebooks for an Ethics*, Sartrean ethics reaches a total new phase in *Hope Now interviews*, which he formulates after the prominent failure of the Marxist and Leftist views.

#### **5.4. Violence and Fraternity Redefined**

Sartre’s intention towards an intense ethical outlook gets a practical shape in the *Hope Now interview of 1980* with Benny Lévy, where he reconsiders the issue of violence. Refuting the identical nature of fraternity and violence, Sartre, in this interview

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emphasises on the bond of fraternity as more fundamental. Where in the *Critique* the true sense of fraternity gets suppressed under the dominance of violence in every form of organised or unorganised human relationships, in the interview Sartre concentrates more on fraternity than violence in uniting man considering fraternity to be a “relationship of being born of the same mother” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 87). Being human we all are said to belong to the same family in the sense of belonging to the same species. In this sense, every other existence or the ‘Third’ no more remains a threat to be controlled or counter attacked. Rather human relationship itself is realised to be “family relationship” where we are all brothers (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 87). Thus, the “son of violence” turns to be “son of the same mother” and hence brothers (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 91). In this shifting attitude within the existential phenomenological forum Sartre considers human praxis to have enough capacity to nurture the sense of fraternity in man. However, he clarifies that brotherhood of fraternity will be realised only when “humanity is achieved within” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 90) and it is ethics which pre-figures it.

Sartre considers ethics to be a “matter of one person’s relationship to another”, which is a fact to be realised in the future, “when human beings truly exist” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 68). It is possible only when man realises its actual orientation. Since according to Sartre, man is continuously in making, human being is never completely established. He presents men only as beings “struggling to establish human relations and arrive at a definition of what is human” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 67). It is a struggle to live together as human beings- the end sought by humanity. In Sartre’s word this end is “to arrive at a genuinely constituent body in which each person would be a human being and collectivities would be equally human” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 67). At that level the way of human living is expected to be of sharing attitude, sharing humane relations with his neighbours. In comparison to that level Sartre considers human beings as submen, who in principle desires to be man and hence, always transcends beyond. Though it is always a process, the desire of going beyond human limitation itself can serve as an effective way towards humanism. One way to advance towards such ethical end is to exercise “what is best in us” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 69).

Against the Marxist view that the workers bound by the relation of production, Sartre claims that it is not the bound of production, but the fact of being human beings

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that ties men with each other. “This is what we must try to study. What does it mean to be human, and to be capable along with one’s neighbour, who is also a human being of producing laws, institutions, of making oneself a citizen by means of the vote?” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 86)

Since ethics is always in process, fraternity also lies in the future – it is to realise that in the pure sense, people are bound to each other in feeling and action (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 91). The understanding of historical bonding through action and feeling will help man develop some new principles of action in a situation engrossed by materiality and scarcity. Scarcity is a fact that there is always less than the required amount for satisfying human needs. In such a situation, according to Sartre, there may be two responses expected—either there is struggle in order to get one’s share or there is effort to create humanity by sharing within. The later can help man realise “what I have is yours; what you have is mine; if I am in need, you give to me, and if you are in need I give to you – that’s future of ethics” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 91).

These newer stands are found to be totally contradictory to Sartre’s earlier positions of the *Critique*, where struggle against scarcity is said to be the cause of violence and instead of “son of mother”, “son of violence” is emphasised. But, in the interview, modifying his view on violence, Sartre holds that violence can neither make history more progressive nor can draw humanity together. Of course, he does not deny its role in “breaking up certain state of enslavement” of the colonised people living in non-human status (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 92). Significantly, while in the *Critique* Sartre defines fraternity in terms of violence and refers to it as “the most immediate and constant form of Terror” (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004, p. 440), in *Hope Now* he says “fraternity and fraternal love do not come from the violence and Terror of killing: violence and fraternity are no longer “twin brothers”; in fact, “violence...is precisely the opposite of fraternity” (as cited in Santoni, 2003, p. 78). In this sense, the pledged group or the pledge cannot be said to be the origin of human relationship or human unity. Observing these changes, it is claimed that in the *Hope Now interviews* a hint of a new ethics of Sartre is found which can be called his Third Ethics, an ethics of intersubjective humanity (Santoni, 2003, p. 81).

However, these changes do not indicate the total denial of Sartre's earlier phenomenological ontology. Negativity and freedom as the very structure of man still carries significance. Hence, even such positive concept is also said to have started with negative experience. Sartre says, "but after we have properly defined fraternity without terror, we will have to come back one day to fraternity-terror" (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 80). The ethical community is a future concept which has not yet taken place. It is still revolution that "appeals to an ethical order" (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 96). Referring to the Paris student revolt of 1968, he argues that if there is fraternity seen, then it is because there is parallel terror. Sartre insists that "the other—the enemy—is constantly acting, and that's what provokes" such situation of conditioned fraternity (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 97).

It indicates that though Sartre withdraws the concept of fraternity from that of violence and discourages violence to the best possible way, he does not outright deny the significance of violence against the suppressors. Hence, in spite of his emphasis on human ethics based on fraternity and brotherhood he seems to support violence of the tortured Algerian against the French (Santoni, 2003, p. 78). "Violence that could be called just, the violence of the colonized against the colonizer" (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 93). Citing the case of the Algerian war, Sartre insists on the use of violent forces against the colonising tendency.

However, even though showing the same sort of antipathy to violence in the *Hope Now* interview as that of the *Critique*, Sartre is found to be quite concerned about the destructive role of violence. Hence, since *Being and Nothingness* till *Hope Now* he repeatedly claims violence to be the freedom destroying element, which negates other's freedom and sections off freedom from each other and hence, its impact is always alienation and opposite to human unity (Santoni, 2003). Camus' conviction against Sartre of supporting unlimited violence gets a break here. Sartre maintains a limit to the use of violence since his earlier writings. In *The Flies*, though he supports the violence committed by Orestes, he immediately shows that he has to pay price for such actions. Further, through Electra's impression on Orestes' deed, he also implies that the Other is always there to give a check to one's activities. But, while it comes to the situation of the oppressed, dehumanised to any extent, Sartre necessarily supports violent resistance as a

means to restore humanity. In *Hope Now* Sartre says, “We were not people who liked to say, violence is splendid, it’s right to use it. Amid the violence, we had to consider the murders, the bombs that were exploding etc., as something we were forced to do, almost as a necessary evil” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 95).

Sartre does not consider violence against oppression as immoral. After experiencing the 1968 revolt Sartre, rather firmly considers the activities of the workers to be moral as it is an effort to demand freedom for everyone. Confirming Sartre’s support for revolutionary violence as moral, Anderson (1993) quotes Sartre,

[E]verywhere that revolutionary violence is born of the masses it is immediately and profoundly moral... the worker and country people when they revolt are completely moral because they are not exploiting anyone...theirs is an attempt to put together a moral society.(as cited in Anderson, 1993, p. 135)

No attitude of original fraternity can save one from such violence at the face of external attack. Sartre does not hesitate to predict that the outcome of such situation shows the obvious possibility of a “Third World War”. Thus, he remains consistent with his view on necessary violence, the anti-colonialist violence against the colonisers. Remaining supportive for the oppressed section of the society he considers violence as necessary and justified. Perhaps for these stands even in his ethical notes Santoni argues that even though there are apparent differences in his views Sartre is still found in continuity with his earlier view on justified violence. He claims,

Sartre’s shifts regarding violence are usually a function of his major shifts in philosophical orientation and concerns-in brief, from a dominantly ontological analysis in *Being and Nothingness* to an increasingly socio-historical portrayal of the human being in the material conditions of history in the *Critique* and finally to the progressive development of a concrete ethics and sketch of an authentic, ethical Fraternity/ Humanity, or “city of ends,” in *Hope Now*. Sartre’s acknowledged and well known tendency to think against himself, both *within* some work and, more definitely, *from* one work to another, should certainly allow him conflicts

in his views that do not necessarily spell incoherence or inconsistency.  
(Santoni, 2003, p. 82)

### **5.5. Ethical Humanism: Sartre and Levinas**

Sartre's ethical stands are often discussed in comparison with that of Emmanuel Levinas as they share a similar background adopting their phenomenological doctrines, criticising and reinterpreting Husserl and Heidegger. Through the phenomenological exploration, Levinas takes a counter position to Heidegger. Memory of the horror of Nazi atrocities leads Levinas to the phenomenological trend from his theological background. Levinas considers the phenomenological dimension of the Other not from the epistemological perspective, but from the perspective of being, in order to understand the Other as a 'being' to be valued. Sartre resembles to Levinas in this sense as Sartre also focuses the self-other relation as a relation between being, denying the relation of knowing. However, Sartre and Levinas differ to a great extent in regard to their ethical position. Unlike Sartre, Levinas's ethics is a thorough criticism of violence in any form. Rather than claiming that violence can no way be escaped in certain situation, Levinas believes that it can be avoided if the Other is given proper respect for its strangeness. He turns from theological orientation to the phenomenological definition of the Other after the Second World war. Experiencing the atrocities of the War he realises the root of these to be the negligence towards the otherness of the Other. Levinas raises voice against the injustice to the existence of the Other which he considers to be the reason behind enduring slavery and rebellion all over the world. During his time the atrocities of Nazism, the mass killing and genocides made him realise the lacking in the existing philosophical explanations. He states how War casts its adverse shadow over the lives of men and arrests the moral institutions. The violence which wars induce in, not only injures and kills persons but more significantly disrupts the continuity and spontaneity of life giving it a direction which is not chosen but forced and thus, negates the substance of man. It makes man to "carry out such actions which destroys the every possibility for action" (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 21).

Levinas claims that Western philosophy till his time, emphasising more on the individual by neglecting the existence of the Other, has reduced the individuals to the bearers of such negative forces which commands them to act in some irresponsible ways

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unknown to themselves. According to him “the mocking gaze of the political man” can only be suppressed by establishing peace over war through moral consciousness (Levinas, 1961/1979, p. 22). This is not possible through the dialectic of the thesis and anti-thesis, or by any violent revolt; but only through establishing an original relation with being.

Levinas begins by criticising the Heideggerian support for Nazi violence. In his occasional papers published after the Second World War he questions the political history by the measure of ethics. According to him, the ‘two blocs’ involved in the World War are united on the basis of physics (i.e. atomic weapons) and not on morals. This lack of morality is backed by the philosophy of subjectivism that has dominated the mindsets till his time. Levinas claims his predecessors and some of his contemporaries like Sartre, of propounding reductionist theories of the Other which reduces the Other to the Same and fails to do justice to the independent existence of other persons. Hence, in *Totality and Infinity* he takes into account this issue seriously and argues for the revival of human ethics.

Levinas defines the Other with a questioning glance, not like the ‘look’ of Sartre that threatens, but a glance that demands a response; response in language through which a meaningful relation and a communication can be achieved. He insists on preserving the distance between the Other and the self which cannot be traversed any way and hence there is no readymade possibility to know the Other. The distance always remains same. Levinas holds, “Of course, I may simply treat him as a different version of myself, or, if I have the power, place him under my categories and use him for my purposes. But this means reducing him to what he is not...” (as cited in Moyn, 2005, p. 13). Therefore, for Levinas, the first approach to the Other should be friendly approach, in a manner of friendly greeting. It is necessary to communicate with the Other in language, to present one’s world in words before the Other. Such communication is possible only when the approach is generous. For this, Levinas emphasises that it is not necessary to surrender the selfhood to the Other. The individual autonomy always remains intact even if we approach the Other with a generous posture opening my world to him to the extent possible and enter into a relation with him through this communication (Moyn, 2005, p. 14). Levinas always leaves scope for dialogue between the self and the Other. The Other,

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in Levinas is not only threatening and conflicting Other. Intersubjective communication, which is considered to be freely chosen and generously approached, is said to be the first step towards being social and ethical.

Levinas' phrase "metaphysics precedes ontology" serves as the initiation to his intersubjective ethics. He presents the Other as a higher level of existence, which is beyond the Being. According to him, theory may have two forms, one that reduces the alterity of the known under the preference of the knowing being and the other is that which preserves the alterity of the known object without reducing it to the knowing. The first kind of theory is identified with ontology, which reduces the Other to the Same and promotes freedom as the identity of the Same, un-alienated by the Other. However, the more significant form of metaphysical theory is the second one. This advanced form questions the rigidity of ontology and calls into question the exercise of the Same that reduces the alterity of the Other within its own shadow (Levinas, 1961/1979, p. 42). This radical way of questioning the same, outside all theories is brought about by the Other, and this is what called Ethics.

The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics. Metaphysics, transcendence, the welcoming of the other by the same, of the Other by me, is concretely produced as the calling into question of the same by the other, that is as the ethics that accomplishes the critical; essence of knowledge. And as critique precedes dogmatism, metaphysics precedes ontology. (Levinas, 1961/1979, p. 43).

Contrary to the philosophical trend Levinas's ethics takes into consideration the Other as the primary account which is irreducible to the Same. With this idea Levinas attempts to maintain a society of the "I with the Other" (Levinas, 1961/1979, p. 47). According to Levinas, the communication to the Other, the saying to the Other, builds up a relationship which is said to be the ultimate relation in being and in that sense metaphysics precedes ontology. The Other is expressed through the theme of 'face' in Levinas's writings. During conversation with the Other, at each moment, he gives a new idea which is beyond one's pre supposed thoughts. It is, hence, said to be the receive from the Other, beyond capacity of the I and hence, Other is said to be identical with the

idea of infinity (Levinas, 1961/1979, p. 51). Infinity questions the spontaneity of freedom.

The infinity is expressed symbolically by Levinas through the expression of face. The face is not necessarily an image or something sensing concrete. It better means the “nudity of the principles, behind which there is nothing further” (as cited in Moyn, 2005, p. 253). The Other is expressed through the face, which signifies the priority of other existent over Being. Face opens other perspectives and initiates the notion of meaning without the assistance of my meaning. Where the earlier ontological explanations, according to Levinas, explains the existent or the Other in reference to the self or the Being, the face brings in the notion of the immediate, the immediate existence of the Other which does not need the help of the self to be referred to. It signals to the immediacy of the face-to-face contact. This conversation with the Other is said to be an ethical relation.

#### **5.5.1. Sartre’s Ethical Position In Comparison With Levinas**

In ordinary understanding there is no direct similarity found between Sartre and Levinas regarding their ethics of intersubjectivity. However, it is to be noted that both Sartre and Levinas considers the Other as a subject having the capacity to transform the very structure of the self. While Levinas considers this transformation to be positive and responsive, Sartre characterises it as alienating and threatening. But this is not the final stand of Sartre’s philosophy. The concept of freedom and negation are effectively exercised by Sartre while presenting his philosophical and ethical explanations. Freedom as the very structure of man compels one to go beyond negating the given. Sartre applies this concept as a methodological tool in his understanding of human reality. Though he considers the intersubjective relation as a conflicting encounter in concrete situation, this is not the strict analysis of his philosophy. Conflicting intersubjectivity is particularly focussed in a more restricted way in his early writing, particularly in *Being and Nothingness*. In his later writings he takes into account many other shades of human relation where opening of the self towards the Other in a positive way occupies significant consideration.

However, critics mostly focus on Sartre's phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness* without considering seriously his later developments and fail to find any effective moral argument in Sartre. Comparing Sartre's philosophy of *Being and Nothingness*, with that of Levinas, critics suggest to modify Sartre's views on conflicting intersubjectivity expressed through the concept of visibility or 'look', incorporating the concept of 'touch' which Levinas adopts to give an ethical orientation to intersubjective relations. Amplifying the concept of touch, Levinas shifts his concern to touch considering it to be more significant than vision, in building up intersubjective relations. Touch, according to Levinas, is not intentional. Like the Sartrean 'look', it does not make one criticise oneself. Rather, it opens one towards the Other (as cited in Oliver, 2001, p. 70). Levinas characterises touch with caress. "The caress ... does not take place between subjects and objects. And all sensibility, even vision, begins with caress: "sensibility must be interpreted as touch first of all....The visible caress the eye. One sees and hears like one touches" (as cited in Oliver, 2001, p. 70). Caress is expressed in the look of love which finds out the invisible in the visible, the possible spiritual aspect hidden behind the body. There is no subject or object pole. Love or caress opens up a realm where the two remains two but impossible of separation. It does not attempt to fix an object for a subject. Love is a non hierarchical relation where there cannot be any attempt at domination. Rather than being self-sacrifice, it is a phase of acknowledging our indebtedness to the other.

While exploring Sartrean ethics in different phases, it is seen that like Levinas, Sartre also advances similar sense of co-operative relation towards the Other, through the method of existential psychoanalysis, comprehension and conversion. According to Sartre, through existential-psychoanalysis one can explore the individual behavioural pattern in the fundamental ontological platform of human reality. This helps one to understand the fundamental goal of human reality and thereby to understand that the Other is also a necessary co-relate of one's self-analysis. The issues of recognition and objectification get relaxed in such analyses. Another idea, introduced in *Being and Nothingness* and developed further in the in the *Notebooks*, is the ideas of comprehension. In short, comprehension implies a sympathetic attitude towards other's end or other's project which one adopts as one's own and helps towards its fulfilment. As Anderson notes, "the authentic individual in his generosity not only comprehends, but

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also adopts the other's free project as his own by willing its realisation" (as cited in Anderson, 1993, p. 80). According to Sartre, in comprehension "I throw myself forward" towards other's end (Sartre J. , 1983/1992, p. 277). In such platform everyone can realise their own ends without any attempt at transcendence. The third attitude that Sartre emphasises on, is the attitude of self-reflection or conversion, which in Anderson's word means, "precisely the choice to cease to value the impossible goal of being God and so to cease in the attempt to use or destroy others in order to attain that end" (Anderson, 1993, p. 34)

Thus, making a total shift in the entire idea of human interaction which ends in ethics, Sartre tries to give a humane orientation to his philosophy. Sartrean ethics is realised through self-transformation called conversion, actualised through the exercise of freedom "which occurs in 'history' and in relation with other persons" (Rosato, 2010, p. 133). Though Sartre does not offer a thorough ethical theory like that of Levinas, Sartre's account of the self-transformation of an authentic person making meaningful room for other's free projects gives a similar weight to his occasional ethical accounts. Sartre rejects the idea of considering values, obligations and responsibilities as givens, to be followed obediently. Rather they arise from the "for-itself's" interaction with the concrete situations. Hence, these are not innate but situational. Like Levinas Sartre also shows the limitation of ontology in substantiating intersubjective ethics. Modifying his ontological concerns, in his third ethics, he maintains that though ontology can provide the ground by giving the description of the "for-itself" and "in-itself", it cannot give the moral prescription as it is beyond the scope of ontology.

He aims at presenting a phenomenological ethics that tries to understand the person as a whole in the real life experience. The violent and conflicting behaviour emphasised in the earlier part of the study is what exercised in bad faith, which Sartre considers to be the ordinary and most common practice of man. But this is not authenticity. The main theme of "for-itself" is to live a free conscious life where in order to make meaningful social interaction the counterpart has to be a free being. Successful intersubjective relation is not possible in this way. This demands conversion or self-transformation of the self which is possible through good faith accepting one's freedom. In this self-transformed stage there is co-operation and dialogue, rather than conflict. In

his final ethical note, Sartre considers the Other as a factor, which can evoke one's ethical response by conditioning individual life in different ways.

Sartre notes that the Other is all the time present there to condition me, may be as a reminder or as an object in my room that someone else made. All these demands a response, a response which is always conditioned by the Other from one's birth itself. This conditioned nature implies the ethical nature of human reality. In this respect and in many others Sartre is similar with Levinas, even without adopting Levinas' concepts.

In the interview with Lévy, Sartre admits, "In *Being and Nothingness* his theory of others left the individual too independent...I hadn't determined what I am trying to determine today: the dependence of each individual on all other individuals" (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, pp. 71-72). He also clarifies that the environment of his writing and thinking has influenced his philosophy to great extent. His continuous stay and dialogue with Benny Lévy has changed his total outlook. To quote Sartre "that fact has completely changed my mode of inquiry, for until now I have always worked alone—sitting alone at a table, with a pen and paper in front of me. Whereas now we work out ideas together" (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 73). This attitude expressed again in the *Hope Now interview*, ascertains that Sartre has given significance to the communication and dialogue which can lead to an effective ethical platform.

However, it is seen that though Sartre insists on the ethics of humanity, he finds it quite difficult to expect it in its purity in a conflict ridden world so easily. He insists on authentic living through conversion and pure reflection where the Other is found to be essential for one's existence. However, the condition of pure reflection is the good will of the Other. Pure reflection succeeds only when the Other agrees to abandon the relation of conflict (Rosato, 2010, p. 165). Sartre claims that such change is not that simple. The otherness or the inherent negativity rooted in human structure is so encompassing that at times it hardly leaves any scope for such reflection.

Referring to the Algerian war Sartre insists on the use of violent forces against the colonising tendency. No attitude of original fraternity can save one from such violence at the face of external attack. He maintains that through the non-functioning status of Democracy, through the necessary scarcity over material needs, through the

overexploitation of natural resources the only prominent picture that appears is the end of humanity “the end of the world” in Kantian sense (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 118).

### 5.6. A Jewish turn

Emphasising on ontological negativity, Sartre argues that more than scarcity, it is the evil in man that is more radical and which may result only in the “end” of the world (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 119). If any normative achievement can be thought of in this situation, then it must be from beyond these factual impossibilities, from the coming of the Messiah, which he considers to be a Jew (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 118). Referring to the Jewish metaphysics, Sartre surprisingly insists on the monotheism of the Jews. He believes that the Jew has a metaphysical connection with the infinite.

This gives a metaphysical and subjective understanding towards their real historical facts. Sartre prefers the Jewish reality as a way out to ethics. In his *Hope now interviews*, Sartre is found considering the Jews as the real carrier of ethics and brotherhood. While writing *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre considered the Jewish unity only in the sense of “us-object” against Anti-Semitism. Giving more significance to the existential-psychoanalytical method, which may initiate a better communication, Sartre moves towards the history of the Jews which he could understand in true sense when he tried to rediscover it from inside after coming into contact with Benny Lévy and his adopted Jewish daughter Arlette (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 101). Through this fact of changing understanding with a dialogue with others Sartre may have tried to focus that one’s perspective may change to a great extent when communication is made opening oneself to the others.

Denouncing his original idea of Jewish identity he expresses his liking for the Jewish concept that “the world will end and at the same moment, another world will appear – another world that will be made of this one but in which things will be differently arranged” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 105). According to the Jew, the world which will appear after the end of this world will be an ethical one. Sartre relates it to his own objective of achieving an ethical world with ethical humanism which will be established after abolishing all the established ethical systems and a new ethics will be formed from below, on the basis of individual choices committed on intersubjective

platform. Sartre further, says that it is only “through a kind of messianism that one can conceive of this ethics as the ultimate goal of revolution” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 107). This way, Sartre shows his inclination in his last phase of life making a fusion between existentialism and Judaism.

### 5.7. Concluding Remarks

It always remains tricky to give a final comment on Sartre’s interpretation on ethics as he never clarifies any note to be final. Though he talks about human co-operation in his ethical notes, the issues of intersubjective conflict reverberates frequently in his later ethics through socio-political circumstances. Contrarily, even in such situation Sartre keeps room for realising original sense of fraternity considering such uprisings only as “one moment in the long enterprise of human unification” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 98). But he left any detail explanation of it to his last expected book on ethics, which could not be written in his lifetime. Hence, it becomes tricky to understand how amidst constant action of the enemy, original sense of fraternity can be realised.

Sartre considered his writings as failures as he actually could not write what he wanted to express. “I have done what I was capable of doing, and it’s worth whatever it’s worth. The future will disprove many of the things I have affirmed; I hope other things will endure; but in any case there is a slow movement, in history, of man’s becoming conscious of his fellowman. When that happens, all that’s been done in the past will fall into place, everything will assume its true value. Among other things, what I have written. That’s what will give everything we have done or will do a kind of immortality. In other words, we must believe in progress. And that, perhaps, is one of my last naïve idea” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 61).

Initiated with a hint on ethical orientation in *Being and Nothingness*, reformulated in *Notebooks for an Ethics* and consequently in the *Critique*, Sartre’s ethics reached a total new phase in the *Hope Now interviews*, which he formulated after the prominent failure of the Marxist and Leftist views. Sartrean Sartre’s fusion of existentialism with Judaism becomes prominent from his *Hope Now interviews* where he criticises Marxism as a dead theory and appreciates Judaism. In the introduction to *Hope Now Interviews*, Ronald Aronson claims, “Both in his general purposes and in most

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specific directions, Sartre does respond directly and appropriately to his conclusion that Marxism as he knew it was finished” (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 33). According to Sartre, after the failure of Marxism the revival of philosophy becomes necessary and ethics takes a major role there. In finding a practical ethical dimension he is found getting attracted towards messianic Judaism that is expected to provide us with an ethics beyond history (Sartre & Lévy, 1996, p. 33).

Although Sartre does not affirm by any moral theory claiming some fundamental moral principles, yet his Kantian inclination cannot be denied outright. Regarding the ethical orientation that Sartre propounds in the *Hope Now interviews* Santoni (2003) hints Sartre’s Kantian inclination as Sartre also emphasises on considering every other individual as an end not as a means, where “all live with respect for, and in unity with, the Other’s freedom” (Santoni, 2003, p. 84). Thus, *Hope Now* also projects the possibility of achieving the Kantian City of ends where human relations sustain as fraternal community not as alienating looks. And this is what Sartre recognises as authentic living where the moral “ought” obligation is subscribed to in a sense though not explicitly mentioned in Sartre’s philosophy. However it is attempted to defend by giving another interpretation that Sartre has not used the term ‘rule or principle’ as like Kant, but has only defined it as ‘image’ created by the individual choices of man (Anderson, 1993). Sartre holds,

When we say that man chooses himself, not only do we mean that each of us must choose himself, but also that in choosing himself, he is choosing for all men. In fact, in creating the man each of us wills ourselves to be, there is not a single one of our actions that does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be... Our responsibility is thus much greater than we might have supposed, because it concerns all mankind. (Sartre J. P., 1947/2007, p. 24)

Concentrating on his motto of individual choice, Sartre tries to find out what sort of interpersonal relation characterises an ethical life. Through the phenomenological interpretation of ethics Sartre focuses on the normativity hidden in the concept of freedom. To understanding the true meaning of freedom is to be able to grasp that freedom is not a certificate to choose arbitrarily. Rather, it guides one to choose the

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good, as it is realised in the intersubjective world. According to Sartre, “for-itself” in its authentic journey, cannot choose the evil. It always chooses the good, which is good for mankind as a whole. Phenomenologically, “for-itself” always remains in making heading towards authenticity. Authenticity is to live and choose in “good faith” keeping the interest of all. It is always relational. According to Sartre, ethics always includes the question of the Other. Having a relationship with the Other means ethical conscience.

Phenomenological account of Sartrean ethics can further be highlighted through the structure of consciousness. In Sartre’s phenomenological explanation consciousness is not the inner-cogito. It is already there in the world. Consciousness spontaneously projects itself in the world in pre-reflective manner. Hence, an ethical motivation, representing the transformation of the self, is a spontaneous activity. Spontaneity is the phenomenological base for ethics. Both for Sartre and Levinas the structure of the self is a means to ethics. Ethics makes a change in the way of being. This ethical subjectivity is the base of Sartrean humanism where the Other is essential for making an ethical transformation in the self. Thus, sharing similarity with Levinas, Sartre also heads towards building up a phenomenological ethics considering the “humanism of the Other”. Without relying on any pre-given ethical norm, Sartre emphasises on making of humanity on the basis of free human choice made on “good faith” which essentially takes others into the fold.

## **CHAPTER-VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

The present study made a sincere attempt to analyse the problem of the Other in the existential phenomenology of Jean Paul Sartre in the backdrop of the phenomenological debate over the issue of intersubjectivity. Sartre presents his version of the argument setting a critical platform against the interpretation of the problem advanced by his predecessors particularly Edmand Husserl and Martin Heidegger. The problem of intersubjectivity as treated by the two philosophers has got interpreted in different ways by different philosophers and literary figures following them. However, in this study the interpretation made by Sartre is basically taken into consideration.

Sartre claims that the phenomenological arguments offered by Husserl and Heidegger for addressing the problem of the Other could not satisfactorily present the uniqueness of the Other as Other. They remain more confined to the subjective explanation and metaphysical speculations of the problem without concentrating on some basic issues related to intersubjectivity. Hence, queries like, how to account for the issues of domination, conflict and alienation from the philosophical perspective remain unsatisfied. In this juncture Sartre offers his interpretation of the problem of the Other concentrating on pre-reflective mode of consciousness which he identifies with freedom and nothingness.

Launching the phenomenological background of the problem in the second chapter, the thesis proceeds to the third chapter where the problem of the Other is discussed from Sartre's perspective. Sartre presents the Other as a subject having the capacity to transform the basic structure of the self. The Other is encountered as an interruption to the freedom of the self. It is Sartre's concept of freedom that acts as a major theme behind the presentation of the self-other relation in different shades. It is significant to note here that Sartre's personal life and his way of living influences his entire philosophical journey to a great extent. Sartre himself admits this factor and holds that the environment in which he works influences his philosophy accordingly. In his early writings Sartre was relatively cut off from the socio-political issues and

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concentrating more on literary imagination he focussed more on individual freedom. Sartre refers to the social set of that period as a reason behind such writings. He says that the social set up was quite encouraging for the radical motto of freedom during that period and he declared his plays written during that period as “theatre of freedom” (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008, p. 33).

Emphasising on the emptiness or nothingness of consciousness, Sartre considers the basic structure of human consciousness to be freedom. Intentionality being practiced, consciousness (being-for-itself) always intends the object (being-in-itself) in order to question it, and brings in the aspect of difference (this tree is not that tree etc.). This capacity of reinterpreting objects, remaining outside this differentiation is characterised as freedom, the basic mode of man. Sartre insists that man is rather condemned to be free without any support from outside. There is neither God, nor any moral principle to guide man in designing his identity. Man is essenceless all the time. His essence remains always in making and he is condemned to shape his own essence through his freely chosen activities. In this anguish of essence making man always remains in a struggle to restore its freedom, as besides this man has no set essence. In his early writings Sartre does not mention about any restriction to freedom, except the presence of the Other, who is again a freedom. The Other is placed by Sartre as an interruption in the free structure of Man. The Other is not an object to be known through intentional exercise. Rather, unlike Husserl and Heidegger Sartre defines the Other as consciousness that has the capacity to arrest one’s freedom, being a freedom itself. The Other is not an object whose existence is to be proved, but a self-evident existence bound together in the existence of the self. It is a subject having the capacity of transforming one’s world to make him apprehend his existence.

Sartre puts forward the concept of the Other as a refused self, sharing a relation of internal negation with the self. Since the very essence of human consciousness is negation in Sartre’s view, one can experience his existence only by negating the Other. In this ontological relation of mutual exclusion, one’s being survives at the expense of the being of the Other and vice-versa. Each keeps on negating the Other like two physical forces (Sebastian , 2005). This way, putting more emphasis on “being-for-others” as the fundamental mode of intersubjectivity Sartre establishes intersubjective

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relations to be an in-built negative relation, a relation of continuous conflict, without considering any probable overcome. This negative image is particularly based on his emphasis on individual freedom and the issue of recognition developed from Hegel. Focusing on these issues polished by his existential themes of emotion and imagination Sartre builds up his argument presenting the Other through the vulnerability of the self.

However, Sartre's concept of the Other is not expressed in his early writings in its complete sense. In the fourth chapter, the thesis incorporates the modified views of Sartre regarding his concept of freedom and otherness. The Second World War gives a decisive turn to Sartre's philosophy as a whole. He realises the limitations of his concept of freedom during his War experiences and tries to modify it in a real situational frame. During the War he experienced that the real problem of human existence was not limited to inter-individual conflict and vulnerability of the self expressed in abstract sense, but in the social sense of vulnerability, which showed its face in the Second World War, where individual liberty remained much subsided in community's grief. In his post War writings and interviews, realising the practical complications of man, Sartre makes some significant modifications in the concept of the Other parallel to the modifications in his concept of freedom. Realising the difficulties of human reality amidst things in a materialistic world he comes out of the narrow meaning of the self-other relation and taking a broad perspective, he considers human reality as being-in-the-world, through which he reflects the sense of social consciousness (Sartre J. P., 1975/2008).

Experiencing the vulnerability of the oppressed during this phase of his social and political engagement, Sartre admits that historical situation always involves man's collective activity. Here, the identity of every other individual no more remains as monstrous subject. Rather, in the situation of common threat the Other is considered as an essential part in recovering humanity as a whole. During this period Sartre emphasises more on human making than self making. He realised that only after making humanity free from enslavement and dehumanisation individual freedom can be restored. With these modifications in his individualistic philosophy, in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* he emphasises on situational freedom and relative autonomy of man (Yovel, 1979, p. 492). In this phase of his political engagement raising voice for the oppressed, Sartre is claimed to have merged his existential phenomenology with Marxism. However, the

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arguments in the thesis establish that though Sartre expresses his inclination towards Marxism accepting Historical Dialectic to be the real philosophy of his time, he confirms his difference from Marxism by significantly showing its limitations in analysing human history.

In the materialistic society, the material need of man, according to Sartre, engraves material scarcity which eventually turns to be the fundamental negative mediation in human reality. Though Sartre applies some of the Marxist concepts in his post War writings, he shows reservation towards the solution given by Marx for overcoming alienation. Sartre holds that alienation is ontologically rooted in human reality which cannot be overcome by overcoming economic exploitation. Since Sartre defines human reality as freedom and nothingness, there is no permanent solution to this negative journey. The material factors (*practico-inert*) constraining the *praxis*, engraves this negativity in human life. His emphasis on constant negativity and negative mediation analysed in different stages of human life deters him from giving a solution to the problem of alienation. According to Sartre, in the present world where material resource is limited in comparison to the human needs, material scarcity substitutes the 'look' of the Other in the shared environment of individuals.

The constant negative mediation, engendered by ontological negativity of man, appears to be the original cause behind human struggle. In the competition of having better share of material satisfaction man considers man as enemy and gets involved in violent struggle. Oppression and dehumanisation becomes inbuilt structure of such society. This also becomes the issue of recognition and identity assertion between and within groups of people. Thus, according to Sartre, in the struggle of making one's life more fulfilled violence and counter-violence gets justified in a society engulfed by scarcity (Sartre J. P., 1960/2004). Sartre's justification of violence is criticised firmly by the academic circle of France.

However, as it has already been mentioned, like the constant making of human essence, Sartre's philosophy also shows a style of constant making. Though Sartre justifies violence against oppression and considers alienation as the inbuilt reality of man, he does not end with such pessimistic note. Amidst all these, Sartre kept room for his ethical observations which he promised to explore in a book form. Though he could

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not materialise it, he left some effective hints on ethical life where in spite of these negative issues man could attempt at sharing an ethical community.

The thesis has incorporated these ethical notes in the fifth chapter with some comparative notes with Levinasian ethics. For both Sartre and Levinas, other persons are essential to ethical conversion and good life. Sartre criticises the epistemological analysis of the problem of the Other and emphasises on treating it as a relation of being. For him knowing is essentially tied up with being. The Other brings about a change in the structure of the self as it leads to a stage of conversion either from inauthenticity and bad faith to an authentic free self which makes rational choice always choosing the 'good', because in Sartre the authentic free self looks only for the good. This phenomenological sense of making and unmaking of the self in terms of recovering from bad faith is a continuous journey in Sartre. The more the self regains its authenticity and widens its horizon accommodating others into its fold, the ethical turn in this existential quest becomes prominent and stage wise there is change in Sartrean ethics focusing more on the social and ethical nature of selfhood. In *Notebooks for an Ethics*, Sartre focuses on the important role played by the Other in bringing about a shift in the self that inaugurates ethics, which he calls the "conversion" to ethics (Rosato, 2010).

The root for this phenomenological self quest was already there from the beginning where *pour-soi* is defined in essential relation with *en-soi* and where consciousness is not found in the inner domain but it is already in the outside reaching out to others. Levinas also provides us with a similar, phenomenological humanism, a "humanism of the Other", according to which the dignity of the human self is re-imagined not on the basis of an absolute *a priori* nature of the human being, but rather, on the basis of the way in which free human persons discover their meaning or purpose by opening themselves to other persons in self-construction, in the sense that ethical normativity is constituted in relationship with others along with the construction of the free and conscious self.

Sartre's and Levinas' common focus on the structure of the self as a means to explain ethics, and on the difference between a pre-ethical self and a self that undergoes an experience by means of which it is recreated as ethical are tied up with the lived dimension of spontaneity in Sartre and with existential facticity and vulnerability in

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Levinas. Both Sartre and Levinas criticise Heideggerian *mit-sein* as an account of intersubjectivity that never actually reaches the Other. Sartre bases his descriptions of our concrete relations with Others on his ontological category “being-for-others”, but he transforms its meaning into radical freedom in existence than Heideggerian focus on ontology of being that homogenises the Other taking the Other as a reflection of the self.

Sartre emphasises that once we see and acknowledge what true freedom really is, we will find that freedom is not the power to choose arbitrarily between alternative courses of action but rather the power to choose the good as it is determined in and through interpersonal relationships. For both Sartre and Levinas, even a single individual remains representative of all others in suffering and in ones quest for authenticity precisely because the Other cannot be reduced to oneself. One’s turn to authenticity and to selfhood and subjectivity is possible because there is an essential Other who is to be addressed ethically with care and empathy with a human dimension of widening the boundary of selfhood that can also accommodate others for whose sake one remains accountable and responsible.

Summing up the discussion we can conclude that considering the intersubjective relation as “being-for-others” Sartre gives a distinct and practical picture of concrete human relation against Heidegger’s concept of being-with. Even conceiving human relation to be a relation of a crew or co-being, without any conflict, Heidegger could not stop him from supporting Nazi atrocities which breaks all possibilities of co-existence. In comparison to such stand Sartre’s phenomenological analysis is found to be quite convincing as he takes into account both positive and negative attitude of man covering his lifelong experiences. The negativity or the conflicting attitude that Sartre focuses on, does not necessarily question the natural human bonding. Since he is influenced by the Hegelian philosophy of recognition and domination, his analysis mainly covers those issues where recognition may occur as a basic cause of concern.

A positive essence of Sartre’s philosophical analysis is that he accepts changes. According to the changes in the social environment during his time, his philosophy is also found taking turn to focus on the concrete human reality. Though it pushed him in different inconsistencies, yet helped his ideas to fit into situations with ideal suggestions. The most significant concept in Sartre’s philosophy is the pre-reflective consciousness

which helps Sartre to establish the existence of the Other without any aid of other arguments. Further, the negativity endowed to the Other could effectively sketch out the conflicting attitude of man becoming prominent in any situation. Though he reflects more on conflicting intersubjectivity, he does not deny the possibility of ethical relations, where people reflecting on pure consciousness, will think of humanity as a whole. Violence, though cannot be done out with, can be minimised by application of such issues.

Summarising Sartre's philosophy, the study reveals that not only propounding freedom but also exercising it in the best possible way in his writings, Sartre experiments some great philosophical fusions according to the developments in his thinking parallel to the development of the society. The first of them is the fusion between phenomenology and existentialism, second, between existentialism and psychoanalysis and the third is between existentialism and Marxism. The study has focused on all these fusions concentrating on his treatment of the problem of the Other. These fusions help to clarify many of the doubts of his critics as most of the criticisms are based on partial understanding of Sartre's analysis. A significant development, that the study reveals in Sartre's treatment of the problem of the Other, is the possible fusion between his existential phenomenology and religious Judaism. This opens a considerably new frame of Sartrean studies which can be focussed in further studies.

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## English translations of Jean Paul Sartre's works

The following is a list of some of the published and translated works of Jean Paul Sartre. The list does not include all the works written by Sartre. An attempt is made to incorporate most of the significant writings with their original year of publication in bracket<sup>16</sup>

### Philosophical essays

- The Transcendence of the Ego (1936)
- Imagination: A Psychological Critique (1936)
- Sketch For a Theory of the Emotions (1939)
- The Psychology of Imagination (1940)
- Being and Nothingness (1943)
- Existentialism and Humanism (1946)
- Search for a Method (1957)
- Critique of Dialectical Reason, Volume I (1960)
- Notebooks for an Ethics (1983)
- Critique of Dialectical Reason, Volume II (1985)
- Truth and Existence (1989)

### Novels and short stories

- Nausea (1938)
- The Wall (1939)
- The Age of Reason (1945)
- The Reprieve (1945)

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<sup>16</sup> The list is prepared by taking help from two sources. Priest, Stephen (ed.) (2001). Jean Paul Sartre: Basic Writings. London. Routledge; comparing with the information available at Wikipedia availed from the source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Jean-Paul\\_Sartre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Jean-Paul_Sartre), accessed on, 9/10/2014.

- *In The Mesh* (1948)
- *Troubled Sleep* (1949)
- *Intimacy* (1949)
- *Iron in the Soul* (1949)
- *Hurricane over Cuba* (1961)

### **Plays**

- *Bariona* (1940)
- *The Flies* (1943)
- *Men Without Shadows* (1944)
- *No Exit* (1944)
- *The Respectful Prostitute* (1946)
- *The Chips Are Down* (1947)
- *Dirty Hands* (1948)
- *Lucifer and the Lord* (1951)
- *The Devil And The Good Lord* (1951)
- *Kean* (1953)
- *Nekrassov* (1955)
- *The Condemned of Altona* (1959)
- *The Trojan Women* (1965)
- *The Freud Scenario* (1984)

### **Politics**

- *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946)
- *The Communists and the Peace* (1952)
- *The Ghost of Stalin* (1965)
- *Between Existentialism and Marxism* (1972)

### **Literary theory and criticism**

- *What is Literature?* (1947)

## **Biography**

- Baudelaire (1946)
- Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr (1952)
- The Family Idiot (1971-72)

## **Autobiography**

- Sartre by Himself (1959)
- Words (1964)
- Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken (1975)
- Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre, by Simone de Beauvoir (1981) (Interviews)
- Witness to My Life & Quiet Moments in a War (1983)
- War Diaries: Notebooks from a Phony War (1984)



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- II. Sharma Pallavi and Archana Barua.( 2013).Analytic vs. Continental Philosophy: Space for Lived Experiences. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2 (6), 11-13
- III. Sharma, Pallavi and Archana Barua.(2013). The Conflicting Other in Jean Paul Sartre's Existentialism. *Quest International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 2(1), 75 -78.
- IV. Sharma Pallavi (2010). On Alienation and Its Overcoming: The Legacy from Hegel to Sartre. *Philosophy Pathways* (online),Issue 157
- V. Sharma, Pallavi (2008). Understanding Ethnic Identity Conflict from J.P. Sartre's perspective with special reference to North East India. Working paper, Published by OKD Institute of Social Change and Development, Assam